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THE MUSIC OF THE CHURCH

CONSIDERED IN ITS VARIOUS BRANCHES,

CONGREGATIONAL AND CHORAL:

AN HISTORICAL AND PRACTICAL TREATISE
FOR THE GENERAL READER.

BY JOHN ANTES LA TROBE, M.A.

CURATE OF ST. PETER'S IN THE CITY OF HEREFORD, AND CHAPLAIN TO THE RIGHT HON. LORD MOUNTSANDFORD.

'Ει γ'οὖν ἀηδὼν ἤμην, ἐποίουν τὰ τῆς ἀηδόνος· εἰ κύκνος, τὰ τοῦ κύκνου· νῦν δὲ λογικός εἰμι, ὑμνεῖν με δεῖ τὸν Θεόν· τοῦτο μου τὸ ἔργον ἐστί· ποιῶ αὐτό· καὶ ὑμᾶς ἐπὶ τὴν αὐτὴν τάυτην ᾠδην παρακαλῶ.'

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TO MY FATHER,

THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED

IN GRATITUDE

FOR THE CARE WITH WHICH

HE ELICITED AND DIRECTED HEAVENWARD

THE MUSICAL TASTE OF HIS

CHILDREN;

AND IN ADORATION OF THAT

BLESSED LORD

WHO HAS ENABLED HIM,

FROM EARLIEST YOUTH EVEN TO HOAR HAIRS,

TO DEVOTE THE MUSICAL TALENT

WHEREWITH HE HAS BEEN ENDOWED,

EXCLUSIVELY

TO ADVANCE THE DIVINE GLORY

IN THE ACTIVE PROMOTION OF

THE MUSIC OF THE CHURCH.

38871

THE MUSIC OF THE CHURCH.

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THE MUSIC OF THE CHURCH.

I.

THE PROLOGUE.

When I write of sacred subjects, I had rather a book of mine should resemble the moon—which, though she be but small, less elevated, and full of imperfections, lends yet an useful light unto men, and produces here and there a motion that obeys a heavenly influence—than a star of the first magnitude, which, though more high, more vast, and more flawless, shines only bright enough to make itself conspicuous. HON. ROB. BOYLE.

IT is impossible for a man of observation to flatter himself, that our church-music is in a healthful and vigorous condition. He must acknowledge, if he has given the subject the slightest consideration, that the end for which music was introduced into our services, is not generally attained; and that the utter listlessness shown by the people to this enlivening exercise is a sufficient evidence of some egregious error in their mode, either of reasoning upon its duties, or of acting up to their convictions. He must feel that the performances of too many choirs, and the non-performances of too many congregations, associate ill with the solemnity and fervour of those other acts of devotion, which so beautifully diversify the worship of the house of God.

If he directs his attention to the churches of populous towns and districts, he may indeed discern an

improvement, if not proportioned to the general advance of science, yet sufficiently decisive to enable him to 'thank God and take courage.' But if he seeks for a corresponding improvement among the far more numerous churches of the country, he seeks in vain. Amid examples of the progress of general knowledge even in the remotest parts of the kingdom, he finds the music of the church still wearing its ancient honours, and glorying in the rust of centuries. The modern spirit of innovation has not touched it. It grasps, with a tenacity which defies any ordinary mode of correction, that combination of bad taste and ignorance, which makes the psalmody a heavy infliction upon an unvitiated sensibility. The smaller churches, unable to command the 'full-breathed volume of sound,' wherewith the organ regulates and mellows the harsh tones of wealthier congregations, are content to repose upon the mercy of a set of singers, who have no idea of instrumental music beyond noise, or of vocal beyond vociferation. And thus the devout worshipper, unless his ear is obtused 'by the plague of custom,' or his mind buried in heavenly abstraction, finds the very means which 'should have been for his wealth, become to him an occasion of falling.'

Many are the individuals, themselves unacquainted with either the theory or practice of music, who spurn thus to compromise their edification, and complain loudly, that the psalmody, instead of stimulating to religious fervour, has sunk like a dead weight upon our ecclesiastical services. Still a general complaint of this nature can avail little. In all arts, mere taste, although uncultivated, will frequently point out blemishes, where they are palpable; but knowledge and skill are requisite to enable us to detect the exact nature of those blemishes, and apply a suitable

remedy. Hence clergymen and others, who mourn that our anthems of praise, should resemble rather the ravings of drunkards, than the hallelujahs of God's people, are yet fain to confess their inability to meet the evil, from their total ignorance of the art. Nay in some cases, where good feelings and correct taste have been too manifestly outraged, they have ventured, as a last and desperate recourse, to suppress totally the voice of thanksgiving, and thus, to accommodate the words of Milton,

> 'Wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.'

Yet even where the abuse has not so extended itself as to make silence preferable to praise, the baneful effects of this low state of divine music have spread themselves far and wide. It has served gradually to deaden the conviction of impropriety, induce a feeling of indifference, and incline even sincere minds to reject music, with all its capabilities for edification, from the list of those gifts which claim and merit a diligent culture. Volumes upon volumes are continually issuing from the press upon subjects of religious obligation, applied to all the divisions and subdivisions of a christian community; some indeed so closely connected with this degraded art, that a stretch of ingenuity seems requisite to pass it over in silence; and yet in vain do we peruse the crowded pages, for one solitary remark upon its preciousness, or one admonitory hint for its cultivation. Every possible topic of ministerial responsibility, doctrinal and practical, is professedly drained; and yet not a word said on the obligation to superintend and encourage the exercise of a hallowed gift. The several duties preparatory to the becoming fulfilment of the pastoral office, from the important work of conversion to the mere trick of elocution, are most urgently

impressed upon the christian student; but not a word said to enforce the necessity of a proper qualification for a portion of that office, which is about to demand not merely his cordial participation, but his judicious direction. The members generally of a congregation are in no want of 'line upon line, and precept upon precept,' to regulate their conduct in and out of the house of God; and yet their indifference to the work of thanksgiving remains unrebuked, and their neglect of preparation passes 'as a thing of nought.' In short so glaring is the want of interest manifested toward devotional music, that we might imagine all reasoning upon its properties was based upon the assumption, that real godliness is in inverse proportion to the cultivation of sacred song.

Occasional hints in different publications redeem the religious world from the universal application of this animadversion. Yet they are presented with a doubtful eye and a penurious hand; and even when dwelt upon, are seldom treated with the slightest degree of that candour, skill, and enthusiasm, which are immediately brought to the discussion of any other topic of common concern. When a writer deigns to notice sacred music, it is either to denounce abuse in some general terms, or to burden its many advantages with such limitations, as grievously to cramp its freedom and fulness, and leave the reader in doubt, whether it be more deserving of cultivation from its inherent good, or of destruction from its attendant evils.

This is exemplified in a treatise of no late date,[1] in which a distinct essay is devoted to 'Singing at Public Worship.' The author admits the low state of our church-music, but ascribes it to what he terms

[1] Essays on Public Worship, by Rev. J. Jones.

'an exuberant harmony'—harmony! the very essence of all solemnity of sound, the absence of which has been the grand cause of its decline. This harmony he represents as introduced in contempt of the melody recommended by St. Paul; as if the Apostle, in the passage to which an evident reference is made, ever dreamed of instituting a comparison between the rhythmical melody which formed the only music of his time, and counterpoint, not invented for nearly ten centuries after his martyrdom. When he spoke of melody, he spoke of music in the highest pitch of refinement to which it had then attained; but surely never thought of criticising different modes of composition, or arbitrarily imposing shackles upon future improvement. What however is the objection of the writer to harmony? Because it 'requires not only several and different kinds of voices, but different musical instruments to support it, by which,' he informs us, 'the simplicity of Christian worship is destroyed, edification hindered, and hardly one of the singers 'sing with grace in their hearts to the Lord.'' Without staying to determine the correctness of these charges against singing in parts, and instrumental music, we may, at any rate expect consistent reasoning. If such grievous consequences are necessarily entailed upon harmony, it is well to denounce it, and the means by which it is obtained. And yet, in the course of a few pages, we find the author suddenly nullify his previous objections, by unequivocally recommending, 'if convenient, the use of an organ,' which is not only a musical instrument, but a combination of 'different musical instruments;' which is moreover requisite only to support that harmony so uncourteously deprecated, and had been well nigh useless for St. Paul's melody so greatly admired. Still it cannot be doubted, but the essayist decidedly

prefers vocal to instrumental music, and yet the eye is soon arrested with a perfectly counter statement, that 'good might result from the use of musical instruments, but for the singers.'[1] Thus are we tossed to and fro, between instrumental and vocal music, and finally left in blind uncertainty which is the greater evil of the two. The bent of the remarks in the little volume is unquestionably good: and this unlucky essay is quoted merely as a sample of the loose, uninformed, and prejudiced manner in which church-music is treated in the present day.

It is to be regretted, that many who, from their superior scientific and practical knowledge are better able to assume the office of instructor, should have so long suffered a subject of high importance to slumber under their pens. I desire, however, merely to pioneer them into the course, and, by adventuring and, at my own peril, to prepare the way for more vigorous and successful exertions. If I can allure any to consider this theme in the actual magnitude of its importance—to throw from them that desolating idea of self-infirmity, which so generally obtains, and consent to wield the power that lies at their feet, merely because they have not troubled themselves to raise it,—if I can add a solitary hint to the obvious suggestions which crowd upon the mind in contemplation of the subject of this treatise—enough! 'it will have lent an useful light unto men.'[2]

If we admit the low state of our Ecclesiastical music, the immediate inquiry suggests itself, With whom rests the responsibility? Not, certainly, with the Church herself. We need only cast an eye over the requisitions of the Rubrick, to see that provision was made, at the very time of the reformation, for

[1] Essays, 49—55. [2] Motto.

its proper encouragement. By a reference to this authority it is plain that, though a power is vested in the officers of the Church, to introduce music at those pauses which may appear locally most convenient, there is yet a distinct recommendation to set apart certain times and portions of the service for the exercise of the instrument and the voice.

Thus the Book of Common Prayer presents no fewer than seven marked opportunities for its introduction, in the present full morning service.

I. The introductory Psalm, with the Psalms for the day.

II. Te Deum Laudamus, or the Benedicite.

III. The Benedictus, or Jubilate.

IV. The Apostles' Creed, or the Creed of St. Athanasius.

V. The Anthem after the Third Collect for the day.

VI. The Litany.

VII. The Nicene Creed.

Five opportunities are afforded in the evening service.

I. The Psalms of the day.

II. Magnificat, or Cantate Domino.

III. Nunc Dimittis, or LXVII. Psalm.

IV. The Apostles' Creed.

V. The Anthem.

In the Communion service, beside the Nicene Creed, two distinct Anthems are mentioned.

I. The Trisagion, before the consecration of the elements.

II. The Gloria in Excelsis, after their reception.

Three portions of the service for the Burial of the Dead are prescribed for the chant.

I. The introductory sentences.

II. The hymn at the grave.

III. The passage from the Revelations of St. John.

Thus we see, that in four of the most important offices in the Church, ample provision was made at an early period, for retaining as much of this sacred art, as might be a comfort and edification to the people. It was however subjected to that thorough purification of the service from Romish superstition, which was the natural result of the escape from Romish thraldom—the more necessary, as the whole ritual had been buried under a mass of sound, and combination of curious, intricate, and unintelligible harmonies. The Reformers, in order to curtail this excess of musical matter, 'cut off anthems, responds, invitatories, and such like thing as did break the continual course of the reading of the Scriptures.'[1] And yet, with these ample excisions, they have preserved sufficient to give the services of our Protestant Church, when fully developed, a decidedly musical character.

As the injunctions of the Rubrick are considered in this respect to come rather under the class of recommendations, than positive commands, a discretionary power has been conceived to reside in the general clergy, to choose such times for the psalmody or chant, as best correspond with the custom of the district, or the convenience of the congregation. Thus, in cathedral and collegiate churches alone, do we find the letter of the injunctions even remotely attended to. In other places, degrees of capability and difference of custom introduce an almost endless variety. In fact, few churches pursue invariably the same plan. The chief practices, deviously and arbitrarily adopted, are the following:—A preludial voluntary upon the organ; one or more of the introductory sentences chanted, or a part of the

[1] Preface to the Book of Common Prayer.

hundredth Psalm sung; a short voluntary after the Psalms; the Doxology chanted, with the Te Deum and Canticles; a Psalm after the Litany; the Response after each commandment chanted; before the sermon a Psalm; another after the service; and a closing voluntary.

The innumerable and undisguised variations introduced clearly prove, that no authority is understood to be lodged in any person or persons to cramp a liberty, thus boldly assumed by the lower clergy, and tacitly admitted by the higher. The Church herself has evidently given every encouragement to the practice of music; and, knowing that it is a tender and wayward plant, which best thrives, when left to branch out into wilful and somewhat irregular shoots, and which droops under the chill blast of an unyielding command, wisely refrained from urging too fiercely the universal observance of a settled plan, and permitted each parish to suit its practice to its own genius, and the nature of its advantages. There is imperatively enjoined upon the people, neither the species of anthems to be performed, the precise character of the psalmody, the nature of the tunes to be adopted, the kind of instruments to be used. The church well knew, that what is desirable is not always attainable; and as poverty and incapacity might be supposed, in some cases, utterly to deprive a congregation of this means of spiritual blessing, so each parish was left free to employ its peculiar resources, as God should aid it. The reformers were too wise not to make a distinction, between what is only a cheering, and what a necessary adjunct to the proclamation of the Gospel.

While, however, we admire the wisdom which withheld the rude hand of oppression, and left music to the workings of her own genius—it

behoves us to inquire, how far this forbearance has been appreciated and acknowledged. It is one thing to avoid forcing the vegetation of a plant, and quite another thing to neglect it altogether. Music, like all other arts which depend mainly upon natural talent and taste, requires tending and nourishment in its rise, and a gentle and judicious pruning in its growth. But what care has been expended over it, when its very existence is often only indicated by the dreadful blight with which it is overspread? If then such be the fact, and the church herself be free from the responsibility, with what class of her members does the charge of unfaithfulness rest? This is an important inquiry. The exercise of a musical gift is of universal obligation; and no person, however subordinate his station and capacity, can claim exemption from those duties which are attached to its cultivation. If he slight it, he is 'hiding a talent in a napkin,' and thus can no more escape responsibility than he who exposes it to abuse.

Before, however, we examine the particular duties of churchmen in this respect, and the manner in which they have been fulfilled, it may not be uninteresting to draw a rapid historical sketch of the rise and progress of sacred music from the earliest to the present times. After which, the consideration of the distinct obligations of the clergy, choir, and congregation, and an examination into the several portions of the musical part of our services, will enable us to form some idea of the actual state of church-music among us, ascertain the reality of any hopes of revival, or the sad necessity of echoing the poet's lament:

> It is too late—the life of all her blood
> Is touched corruptibly: and her poor brain,
> Doth, by the idle comments that it makes,
> Foretell the ending of mortality.

II.

THE PROGRESS OF CHURCH MUSIC.

> Sweet music with blest poesy began,
> Congenial both to angels and to man,
> Song was the native language to rehearse,
> The elevations of the soul in verse;
> And, through succeeding ages all along,
> Saints praised the Godhead in devoted song.
>
> Bp. Kenn.

The term music is applied to every pleasing combination, or succession of sounds. It awaits not the decision of practised judges, but is boldly assumed by the rudest strains that arouse popular applause. The rambling dissonance, which issues from the wooden box ground by a strolling Italian, claims the same appellation as the most finished performance of the first master. In its execution, music is termed vocal or instrumental, according as it is produced by the voice or mechanical agency. In its application, it is either sacred—devoted to the service of God; or secular—employed as a mere sensual amusement. The design of this work confines us exclusively to sacred music; and before entering upon the practical consideration of its present state in this country, we would trace briefly its progress from the remotest ages, to the period, when, by gradual improvements, the system was established which now generally prevails.

The astonishing influence that music possesses over the feelings, and its earliest application to the noblest purposes, might lead us to suppose, that history would supply ample materials from which to cull instances of the real blessing derivable from sacred song. But it is far otherwise. At no period of the world has a sense of their vital interests so entered into the calculations of men generally, as to induce them to number, with any care, the real spiritual advantages to be drawn from the cultivation of any art, or the exercise of any natural endowment. Mere amusement indeed is as exultingly remembered as rapturously pursued; but spiritual enjoyment, seldom sought, is seldom found; and the sickly sentimentality which counterfeits it, possesses not merit enough to claim a record. Hence proofs of the religious influence of music in times past, are but sparingly interspersed over a wide surface, presenting many a fruitbearing tree to the mere secular historian. The four massy tomes of the indefatigable Burney, however abounding in monuments of the most undaunted research, are sufficiently scanty in examples of the successful application of music to the grand purposes of religion, the glory of God, and the real good of man.

The origin of vocal music is involved in obscurity. Tradition assigns to it the same inventor as instrumental; but it is surely more reasonable to conceive with Bishop Kenn, that it was coeval with the creation of man. Though the concise and compressed character of the Mosaic history admits no data upon which to found this supposition, yet we may readily conclude from the nature of music, and the original perfection of the human powers, that the Garden of Eden was no stranger to 'singing and the voice of melody.' We read in Scripture that before the fall, the state of our first parents was a state of unmingled happiness. Now

it is the very nature of joy to give utterance to its emotions. We see this in every grade of animal existence. Happiness must have its expression. The social principle which is in the breast of all creatures, urges them mutually to communicate the feelings of delight of which they are susceptible. And thus it may well be supposed, that man in his state of primal felicity would seek to express, by every conceivable mode, the love, gratitude, and joy which absorbed every affection of his nature.

Now the most natural as well as powerful medium for conveying these feelings with which we are acquainted is music. It was not till it became cultivated and refined by human inventions that it assumed the character, and was made to speak the language, of moody melancholy. Hence, throughout the sacred record, we find it almost invariably spoken of as the voice of thanksgiving and joy. When the Psalmist invites to the exercise of the song and the harp, it is ever ' to give thanks unto the Lord, and tell of all his wondrous works.'[1] And so under the new dispensation, the Apostle recommends prayer for the afflicted, and singing for the jocund in heart;[2] manifesting the light in which music was considered for many centuries as a pure eucharistical medium, not naturally responsive to the emotions of a sorrowful spirit. When affliction came, the harp was hung upon the willows, and prayer was made unto the Lord. The very character of the instruments in use during the Jewish polity, which, with the exception of the harp and fife, were almost all instruments of percussion, manifest that the whole style of musical performance was designed to express joy and extirpate sadness by the loud strains of some bold and exhilarating melody.

[1] Psalm cv. 1, 2. [2] James v. 13.

This observation is further enforced by the present influence of music wherever it is left most freely to its own movements, unshackled by form, habit, or other circumstances. Who ever heard a child sing when under severe punishment? And who has not heard the wild and light-hearted song with which he has greeted the return of a holiday, or the gift of an unexpected pleasure? Nay, who is there, unless he has made music a second nature by constant practice, that ever feels, when bowed down under the pressure of severe trouble, any inclination for musical indulgences? Minor sorrows may indeed be soothed by a sympathizing harmony; but heavy affliction spurns at such a remedy, as uncongenial and obtrusive, and turns to the only true source of consolation, recommended by St. James.

If then music in its most unsophisticated state be the expression of joy, it cannot be supposed unknown to our first parents, whose exultation was as intense, as it was hallowed.

> 'Neither various style,
> Nor holy rapture, wanted they to praise
> Their Maker in fit strains, pronounced or sung,
> Unmeditated, such prompt eloquence
> Flowed from their lips, in prose or numerous verse
> More tuneable, than needed lute or harp,
> To add more sweetness!'[1]

The open intercourse, moreover, that then subsisted between 'the armies of heaven, and the inhabitants of earth,' authorizes the idea, that the musical powers of the one might be excited, and expanded, by the daily and nightly example proposed to them by the other—an idea in strict conformity with the Scriptural account of the employments of angelic spirits. Whenever, on occasions of solemnity, they are intro-

[1] Milton's Paradise Lost, Book IV.

duced to our notice, it is almost invariably with song. Thus at the creation, 'the morning stars sung together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.'[1] At the redemption, 'a multitude of the heavenly host' chanted an anthem of praise.[2] And in the abode of the blessed, the saints of God are represented as uniting with angels in the strains of a glorified harmony.[3]

'How often from the steep
Of echoing hill, or thicket, have we heard
Celestial voices to the midnight air,
Sole, or responsive to each others' note,
Singing their great Creator? Oft in bands
While they keep watch, or nightly rounding walk
With heavenly touch of instrumental sounds,
In full harmonic number joined, their songs
Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to Heaven.'[4]

But soon the voice of unalloyed thanksgiving was silenced. Sin brought with it sorrow; and ever since the Hallelujahs of the saints have been strangely intermingled with the moanings of self-reproach, and the cries of judicial suffering. The heart, now become the seat of a tremendous conflict between sin and holiness, lost its elasticity, and needed some outward excitement to call forth its song of praise. Hence the invention of instrumental music, which is assigned by Scripture to Jubal, who sprang from the loins of Cain. 'He was the father of those who handled the harp and organ.'[5] This passage comprehends the whole of our information, respecting

[1] Job xxxviii. 7.
[2] Luke ii. 13, 14.
[3] Rev. xiv. 1—3.
[4] Paradise Lost, Book IV.
[5] Gen. iv. 21. Organ or pipe. 'Kercher affirms that the word Musick (μσσικὴ) was derived from the Egyptian word Moys, which signifies water, because music was found out, or at least improved, near the standing pools or marshes of the Nile, and this improvement was occasioned by the reeds or rushes which grew there in great abundance, and of which at first they made the trumpets.'—The Temple Musick, by Bedford, 11.

the state or progress of music before the flood. Six hundred years after that visitation, we meet with its casual mention in the reproach of Laban to Jacob by which we learn, that at least in Syria, it was customary to celebrate any important event 'with mirth and with songs, with tabret, and with harp.'[1] Many centuries subsequently, we are introduced to the first specimen of a choral hymn of praise, in either profane or sacred story.[2] It was sung antiphonally, by Moses and the men on the one hand, and Miriam and the women on the other, by occasion of the great deliverance of the Israelites from the hand of Pharaoh. Nor was it unaccompanied by musical instruments and the dance, according to the usage of the Egyptians, 'who, we are elsewhere informed, excelled in music as in other arts, although they desired no further knowledge in it, than seemed sufficient to magnify their gods, their kings, and good men.'[3] It was natural that the Israelites should retain the customs, to which the use of centuries had attached them, especially under the conduct of Moses, 'who was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.'[4] We afterwards find them adopting the same practices in their idolatrous worship of the golden calf, singing and dancing around the image.[5] One fact is deserving of particular notice, that in the early history of all nations, the first musical attempts were devoted exclusively to religious purposes. The Egyptians were so jealous of its sacred application, that as soon as their music became 'corrupted, they condemned it, not only as unprofitable, but also as hurtful, because they were persuaded, that it would enervate the vigour of men's minds; and therefore they made a law to forbid their children the learning

[1] Gen. xxxi. 27. [2] Exodus xv. 1—21.
[3] Bedford's Abuse of Music. [4] Acts vii. 22. [5] Exod. xxxii. 19.

of this science.'[1] It was also originally held sacred by the Greeks, who were indebted for their knowledge to the Egyptians; as well as by the Romans, who derived theirs from the Greeks; and it is remarkable that, 'whenever their songs were debased, their manners were corrupted.'[2]

The Israelites also for many ages sanctified the art, and evidenced clearly the light in which they regarded it, as bestowed for the adoration of the Giver, and not for the indulgence of selfishness or impurity. Their jealousy of its sacred application was so great, that they appear to have hesitated to employ music, even for secular purposes of the purest kind. Trumpets indeed were used in their military expeditions; but as their battles were, in a marked manner, the battles of the Lord, undertaken by his command, and carried on under his conduct, the exercise of these instruments was in strict accordance with their dedication. 'Behold,' said Abijah to the army of Jeroboam, 'God himself is with us for our captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you, O children of Israel: fight ye not against the Lord God of your fathers; for ye shall not prosper.'[3] In the conflict between Jehoshaphat, and the united armies of the Moabites and Ammonites in the valley of Berachah, typical of 'the battle of that great day of God Almighty,' predicted by the prophet Joel and the Apostle John, as preceding the events of the day of judgment,[4]—we find a signal instance of the divine approval of the Israelitish military music, and its inspiriting effect upon the army. 'And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of

[1] Cornelius Agrippa, quoted by Bedford.
[2] Bedford's Abuse of Music, p. 5. [3] 2 Chron. xiii. 12—15.
[4] Joel iii. 11—14. Rev. xvi. 16.

holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever; and when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord sent ambushment against the enemy, and they were smitten. And they came to Jerusalem with psaltries, and harps, and trumpets, unto the house of the Lord.'[1]

With this single exception, if it be considered an exception, the Jewish music was confined exclusively to acts of divine worship. Shortly after the Exodus, did God authorise and command the use of instrumental music upon occasions of religious service. 'Thou shalt cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound.'[2] And so prominent a part was assigned to this inspiriting instrument, that 'a day of holy convocation' was designated from its use. 'It is a day of blowing of trumpets unto you.'[3]

Although the exercise of musical instruments upon solemn festivals was thus sanctioned by divine authority, we meet with only slight allusions to it, till the time of David. Little indeed is said of Music of any kind, because the season presented few facilities for its cultivation. When the necessaries of life are with difficulty supplied, it cannot be expected that its luxuries should be much an object of request. In the wilderness, when the soul of the people refused comfort, and they were 'even hard at death's door,'[4] they could have little inclination to refine upon the startling blast of the trumpet, which aroused them ever and anon to a sense of dependency upon God. Music is the offspring of peace and dignified repose; and the waste howling wilderness, with its fiery serpents, its hot sand, and drought, souring spirits naturally self-willed and repining, could be but an

[1] 2 Chron. xx. 21, 22, 28.
[2] Lev. xxv. 9.
[3] Numb. xxix. 1.
[4] Ps. cvii. 18.

unfavourable school for its cultivation. And so it proved. The prophetic benediction of Moses excepted,[1] there is little related in the four books which contain an account of the journey through the desert, but what must have proved an antidote to any musical indulgences,—the workings of an angry and rebellious spirit, and a hankering after heathenish abominations. In the book of Numbers, indeed, occur four of the most exquisite poems in the whole compass of Scripture,[2] chanted however not by the Israelites, but by a heathen prophet, in a *style*, which clearly evinces the superior literary advantages, a residence at an opulent and peaceful court had given. him over the sons of Jacob, harassed and hard-bestead.[3] The turbulent season which succeeded, during which the whole attention of the people was directed to the expulsion of the Canaanites, was not more favourable to the culture of an elegant accomplishment. Their instruments seem hardly to have advanced beyond trumpets and ram's-horns; and of their compositions, poetical and musical, which were ever conjoined, we read nothing till the times of the Judges. We then meet with the vocal duetto of Barak and Deborah, sung upon the defeat of Sisera and his host.[4] The interesting episode of the daughter of the valiant Jephthah recalls to remembrance the Egyptian use of timbrels and dances, which seem to have been almost the only accompaniments to the voice, excepting trumpets, till the time of Saul.[5] The song of Hannah, the mother of Samuel, 'when her heart rejoiced in the Lord, and her mouth was enlarged over her enemies,' leads us to the period when Israel became a kingdom.[6]

Hitherto we see music struggling with the most

[1] Deut. xxxii. [2] Numb. xxiii. xxiv. [3] Is. viii. 21. [4] Judges v. [5] Judges xi. 34—40. [6] 1 Sam. ii. 1—10.

untoward circumstances, exciting attention timidly and only upon occasion of some great victory or deliverance, as though fearful of that abuse to which it has since been subjected. Now we can contemplate it raising its head, and claiming modestly its rank among the gifts of its Maker. The time was come when Israel dwelt safely, and when the priests could, without distraction, devote themselves to their several duties. Then prophecy, poetry, and music flourished hand in hand. We ever find the prophets of God clothing their expressions in measured language; and we may infer from incidental allusions in Scripture, as well as from oriental customs, that they accompanied them with the voice, and not unfrequently with instruments. A proof of this may be gathered from 1 Sam. in which 'a company of prophets' are represented 'as coming down from the high place, with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp before them; and they shall prophesy,'[1] which implies, that these instruments were used in the act of prophecying. That music was thus employed to soothe the mind and invite inspiration, we learn from the example of Elisha, who, when consulted by the three kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom, demanded a minstrel to be brought unto him. 'And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him.'[2] It would therefore seem that prophetic inspiration was delivered in extempore poetry, unshackled by the trammels of a limited metre, and accompanied by instruments in a style not greatly dissimilar to that in use among the improvisatori of Italy, or the penillion singers of Wales.

As soon as the Israelites had established themselves

[1] 1 Sam. x. 5. See also 1 Chron. xxv. [2] 2 Kings iii. 15.

in their newly-acquired provinces, they appointed a resting-place for the ark, and fixed the sons of Levi, of which tribe were the musicians by divine command,[1] in their respective rites and emoluments. They had, moreover, what were termed 'schools of the prophets,' institutions evidently appointed for education in the several duties of the sacred profession, among which chanting and instrumental music held a prominent rank.[1] To the reign of David, however, we must turn for the proper encouragement and complete establishment of music, in the worship of the tabernacle.

David's character as the 'sweet singer of Israel,' is fully developed in the Psalms and historical books of scripture. His talent seems to have been of the first order, and directed to the noblest purposes. He had never prostituted it to the service of false gods or sentimental affections; but having early, in the simplicity of his days, devoted himself to the God of his fathers, he placed upon the same altar the sacrifice of his endowments and of his affections. His was 'a harp of solemn sound,'[2] responsive only to the voice of holy love and exultation. It was his companion, as well amid the splendour of his court, as in the modest retirement of a pastoral life. In the latter it was the sprightly associate of unadulterated joy; amid the former, the participator of the cares of monarchy, the solace of domestic affliction, and the ready instrument of 'showing forth the faithfulness and loving-kindness of the Lord.'[3]

But David did not confine his musical gift merely to express feelings of private and personal interest; he devoted it to a more generous use; to soothe the frenzied melancholy of the unhappy, to accompany

[1] Numb. x. 8. [2] Psalm xcii. 3. [3] Psalm xcii. 1—3.

the social worship of a select few, and to regulate and enliven the services of the tabernacle.

The moody madness of Saul presented an early opportunity for the exercise of the first dedication of his lyre to soothe the sorrows of others. Though this peculiar malady was of miraculous interposition, yet we may gather from the advice of the royal servants, that it assumed an ordinary aspect, and led to the supposition that it might be counteracted by ordinary means. 'Let our Lord now command thy servants, to seek out a man who is a cunning player on an harp; and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well.' We observe, therefore, in the temporary remedy resorted to, the acknowledgment of a fact, admitted in every age, the power of music to lull to rest the agitations of a brooding and stormy spirit. It is evident, from the whole narrative, that it was the divine blessing acting upon human skill, that left the effect to follow its natural cause, unthwarted by any cross purpose, like that 'jealousy,' which afterwards rendered all David's attempts worse than abortive. Thus no other recommendation was needed for the young musician, than that he was 'cunning in playing.' 'And it came to pass when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.'[1]

That the Psalmist employed his musical powers to enliven social worship, we gather from many passages in holy writ. The following is decisive upon the subject: 'I will give thanks unto the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright,' or, as in the Psalter version, 'secretly among the faithful, and in the congregation.'[2]

[1] 1 Sam. xvi. 16, 18, 23. [2] Psalm cxi. 1. also Psalm xxii. 22.

The exertions of David to regulate the tabernacle music particularly attract our attention. We find him not disdaining to mingle with the company of singers, but uniting to swell the general thanksgiving. Eusebius, in his Preface to the Psalms, asserts, that 'as the head of the prophets, he was generally in the tabernacle with his lyre, amid the other prophets and singers, and that each of them prophesied and sung his canticles, as inspiration came on.'[1] He seems to have composed as well the music as the poetry of the tabernacle. He multiplied the number of performers, determined the distinctive situation of each, introduced many new instruments, and with the most sedulous care acted as the director of the whole band. The personal interest he took in the tabernacle music appears in the narrative of the conveyance of the ark from the house of Obed-edom, in front of which he is represented as 'dancing and leaping before the Lord, with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.'[2] The undisguised fervour of his devotion upon this occasion aroused a bitter reproach from Michal, who presumed to pass judgment upon a rapture in which she participated not, and received in consequence a severe rebuke from the Lord. David defends his conduct by appealing to his sincerity, and stating the extent of obligation under which he lay to God, 'who chose him before Saul, and before all his house, to appoint him ruler over Israel. Therefore will I play before the Lord.' Burney, with the jealous eye of a professed musician, marks the unceremonious expression with which, in the fulness of her spleen, Michal honoured his Jewish fraternity, comparing her husband contemptuously to 'one of the vain fellows,'

[1] Burney's Hist. Mus. Vol. I. p. 231. [2] 2 Sam. vi. 14—16.

meaning plainly the musical professors of that day.[1] It is indeed a very possible case, that ostentatious vanity was not unknown, at a time when extravagance of gesture was both tolerated and commended. Upon this occasion David laid the foundation of his future plans, by 'preparing a way for the ark of God, and pitching for it a tent.' He then proceeded to assign the Levites their proper duties. For this purpose, 'he spake to the chief Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of music, psalteries, and harps, and cymbals, sounding by lifting up the voice with joy.' Some were 'appointed to sound with cymbals of brass;' others, 'with psalteries of Alamoth;' others again, 'with harps on the Sheminith to excel. And Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, was for song: he instructed about the song, because he was skilful;' and others 'did blow with the trumpet before the ark of God.' 'Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord, with shouting and with the sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps.'[2]

After these preparatory arrangements, David 'appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord, and to record, and to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel. . . . Jeiel with instruments of psalteries and harps; Asaph to sound with cymbals; Benaiah also and Jahaziel the priests with trumpets continually before the ark of the covenant of God.'[3] And having enforced the daily services, morning and evening, he expressly enjoined, that, with the officiating priests, 'Heman and Jeduthun, and the rest that were chosen, who were expressed by name, should give thanks to the Lord, because his

[1] 1 Sam. vi. 20—23. [2] 1 Chron. xv. [3] 1 Chron. xvi. 4—6.

mercy endureth for ever. And with them Heman and Jeduthun, with trumpets and cymbals for those that should make a sound, and with musical instruments of God.'[1] Their service was literally continuous; as we are told, in a former chapter, that 'the singers, chief of the fathers of the Levites, were employed in that work day and night.'[2] For this purpose they were divided into twenty-four courses, and were so greatly multiplied in number that, towards the close of David's life, he enumerates 'four thousand who praised the Lord with instruments, which he made to praise therewith.'[3] And 'the number of them with their brethren that were instructed in the songs of the Lord, even all that were cunning, were two hundred fourscore and eight.'[4] This astonishing number of instrumental and vocal performers was designed for effect upon days of solemnity in the full congregation, as well as for relief in the daily service.

The innovations introduced by the Psalmist in the tabernacle music, seem to have had reference chiefly to the number of performers and variety of instruments. Whether he improved upon the style of composition we have no means of determining. That he was a man of great natural musical talent cannot be doubted; but the previous infancy of the art, and the unwieldy materials upon which he had to work, must have greatly obstructed the developement of his genius. Hence his alterations seem to have had relation to quantity rather than quality, to noise rather than refinement. Almost all the instruments mentioned, as far as we can now determine their character, are instruments of effect. Such a profusion of timbrels, cornets, cymbals, and trumpets, must

[1] 1 Chron. xvi. 41, 42.
[2] 1 Chron. ix. 33.
[3] 1 Chron. xxiii. 5.
[4] 1 Chron. xxv. 7.

have had a surmounting influence over the voice and lyre, and checked all advance in musical excellence. The rough character of the language also, which appears ill suited to express the softer modulations, has been considered unfavourable for music. This opinion is further confirmed by the present mode of chanting in the synagogues, which, however depreciated in excellence, retains, in all probability, some resemblance in style to the tabernacle music in the time of David.[1] Those who have ever stept into a Jewish synagogue will not greatly regret our ignorance of the music of this era, when the nighest imitations of the Psalmist's choral performances are found to be little better than measured clamour.

It is now impossible to determine accurately the nature of the many instruments mentioned in the Old Testament. As an instance of the obscurity of all genuine information upon this subject, no less than six versions, the English, the Latin version of the Hebrew, the Chaldee Paraphrases, the Syriac, the Vulgate, the Arabic, differ totally in their interpretation of the musical instruments mentioned in the third, fourth, and fifth verses of the final Psalm.[2] The same uncertainty attaches to the meaning of the headings of many Psalms, though they are generally allowed to refer to melodies or instruments. Tindal, admitting however that 'divers authors do diversely expound them,' supposes that they were designed to enable the choir to give out the tune, as is the custom in some churches, that the congregation might the more readily unite. 'For the Psalms were songe at certen instrumentes, but so that the swete tune and instrument prepared the mynde more perfectly to receyve the worde of Holy Dictie.'[3]

[1] Temple Music, by Bedford, p. 68.
[2] Burney's Hist. Music, Vol. I. p. 238.
[3] Ibid p. 241.

Whatever particular interpretation may be affixed to disputed terms, the reader of the Book of Psalms meets with evidence sufficient, that David exercised the gifts of his Maker with no timid hand. He had not learnt the querulous art of ingeniously tormenting himself, by disowning a positive blessing for fear of an imaginary evil. He knew that he possessed a talent powerful to elevate his own affections, and those of his people, and he sought to ensure it from abuse, by encouraging its dedication to the worship of Jehovah. Instead of trampling upon a divine endowment, and so tacitly charging God as the author of temptation, he calls upon the whole of created nature, from the 'heaven of heavens with all their hosts, to the stormy wind fulfilling his word,' to join man in the praise of Him whose glory is above heaven and earth. He witnessed the abuse of this noble art; for he complains that 'the drunkards made songs upon him,'[1] but he permitted not the slime of that abuse to pollute the stream of musical devotion, which flowed from the lips of God's people. The very example presented of the perversion of this talent, determined him the more firmly to dedicate it to God—'I will praise the name of God with a song, and magnify him with thanksgiving.'[2]

Little is related of the music of the Temple during the reign of David's successor. We read however that he not only countenanced its exercise, but brought it, as far as regards numerical force, to a higher degree of perfection than it had ever attained. He was himself a diligent composer, 'his songs being a thousand and five.'[3] Upon the completion of his temple, he introduced into it among other treasures, 'all the instruments' which David his

[1] Psalm lxix. 12. [2] Ibid. 30. [3] 1 Kings iv. 32.

father had dedicated, added harps of peculiar richness, and installed the musicians in their respective offices.[1] God was moreover pleased, at the temple dedication, to signify by a marked token, His approbation of the mode by which, in all the pomp of ceremonial magnificence, and the full power of a resounding chorus, Solomon ushered in this high and holy festival. 'It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lift up their voice with the trumpets, and cymbals, and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord.'[2]

We perceived, already, in the last reign, that music was no longer confined exclusively to the worship of God. Like holy Job, David had to complain that he was 'the song' of wicked men, 'who took the timbrel and harp, and rejoiced at the sound of the organ.'[3] It was thus the handmaid to licentious and treasonable satires, and no doubt was abused on all occasions of intemperance and luxurious indulgence. If such was its fate under the chaste and correcting hand of the Psalmist, we might well wonder, if during the reign of his sensual son Solomon, amid the revelry of a reckless court, so absolute a master of the passions should be left to exert its influence over a worshipping congregation, and not be summoned occasionally to elicit a more sprightly tone of feeling from the concubines and dependants of the king. In his enumeration therefore of the many treasures of imaginary felicity, which he had heaped together in his palace, he names music: 'I gat me men singers and women

[1] 2 Chron. v. 1. ix. 11. viii. 14. [2] 2 Chron. v. 13.
[3] Job xxx. 9. xxi. 11, 12.

singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts.'[1] And thus musical gratifications for their own sake are classed with those many indulgences, which he designates with one sweeping denomination, 'vanity and vexation of spirit.'

The reign of Solomon is universally considered the most splendid era of the Jewish nation. In extent of dominion, wealth, wisdom, and general estimation, he surpassed even his father David, and left all his successors at a wide distance. The kingdom, in the zenith of its prosperity, enjoyed universal peace; and the example of the king, who combined to the soundest wisdom a taste and talent for poetry and its kindred arts, would naturally raise the mental no less than the political character of the country. Hence we may reasonably suppose, that music attained its highest degree of cultivation during this reign: certain it is, that all the notices of it in the remaining part of Scripture history, concise as they are, denote a neglect of the art keeping pace with the decline of the nation. The future course of political events in this unhappy country was turbid and unsettled. The kingdom was split into two portions. The one, the only repository of a true ecclesiastical service, was governed with but few exceptions by a succession of idolatrous and licentious kings. The whole people, subject to the divine displeasure, were exposed to their own inwrought evils, murder and sedition. They lay under continued apprehensions of coming judgments, and had neither time nor inclination to attend to the arts of peace. Music shared the fate of other accomplishments. Like a bubble upon a tempestuous sea, it sank and rose with every wave, till it was finally overwhelmed in the shipwreck of the state.

[1] Eccles. ii. 8.

As the people, 'by adding sin to sin,' were ripening for judgment, God expressly declares by his prophets his resentment of the abuse of music, and his abhorrence of its hypocritical use in the worship of the temple. He who says: 'Woe unto them that chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music like David, that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments, but are not grieved for the afflictions of Joseph,' says also: 'I hate, I despise your feast days; I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.... Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.' [1]

One fact, however, is worthy of observation, as a striking proof of the value that God sets upon this portion of his service. The reader of the history of these turbulent times cannot but notice, that the few kings who sought to redeem music from that pollution and neglect which it experienced under their idolatrous predecessors, were those who 'walked in the ways of David.' A zeal for the Lord of Hosts ever displayed itself in the renovation of the music of the temple. Thus in the early part of the reign of Joash, in which 'he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord;' [2] he turned his attention to a reformation of the temple service, appointing the priests 'to offer the burnt-offerings of the Lord, as it is written in the law of Moses, with rejoicing, and with singing, as it was ordained by David.' [3]

Hezekiah's reformation, as it seems to have been more sincere, so was also more lasting. He commenced his correction of abuses with a vigorous hand. He dallied not with the divine jealousy, but 'did his work suddenly.' [4] The grand spring of his exertions

[1] Amos vi. 1, 5, 6. compared with v. 21, 23. See also Isaiah v. 11, 12.
[2] 2 Kings xii. 2. [3] 2 Chron. xxiii. 13, 18. [4] 2 Chron. xxix. 36.

we find to have been 'the commandment of the Lord by his prophets,' and thus, in obedience to that command 'he set the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps. . . . And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David king of Israel. And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded, and all this continued until the burnt offering was ended.'[1]

Much surely might be expected of a king like Josiah, who, already 'in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, began to seek after the God of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand nor to the left.'. . . In his twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem, . . . and having broken up all idolatrous practices, 'in his eighteenth year he set himself to build what the kings of Judah had destroyed.'[2] As assistants in this work, though the nature of their aid is not specified, are expressly mentioned 'all that could skill of instruments of music.'[3] We find, as may be expected, that he restored 'the singers, the sons of Asaph, to their place, according to the commandment of David, and Asaph, and Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer.'[4]

This attempt, however, proved but a faint glimmer before darkness. In the very next reign commenced the gradual desolations of Judah; and when at last man's sin bore down God's forbearance, 'the wrath of the Lord arose against his people till there was no remedy,' the Holy Tabernacle became a heap of stones, and 'God caused to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bride-

[1] 2 Chron. xxix.
[2] Ibid. xxxiv. 2. 3. 8. 11.
[3] Ibid. 12.
[4] Ibid. xxxv. 15.

groom, and the voice of the bride; for the land was desolate.'[1]

During the seventy years spent in Babylon, music seemed entirely neglected by the Jewish captives. They were in a heathen country, exposed to witness daily abominations—the objects of scorn and insult—their God dishonoured, his worship neglected, and his name blasphemed. That which was the soul of their melody, and had given life and energy to its exercise, was no more. 'All joy was darkened, the mirth of the land was gone.'[2] Music they heard, but levelled against themselves: 'Behold their sitting down, and their rising up; I am their music.'[3] But their own sad and painful reflections denied them the solace of their native songs in the house of their pilgrimage. Beautiful is the picture drawn of their situation by the author of the hundred and thirty seventh Psalm. Sitting in silence and in tears by the waters of the Euphrates, their eye glancing over a wide range of heathenish superstition towards their 'Holy and beautiful house in which their fathers had served Jehovah, now burned up with fire,' their harps hanging voiceless upon the willows that shaded the banks, how could they otherwise but feel insulted, to hear the rude demand obtruded upon them by their heathen conquerors, 'requiring melody in their heaviness: Sing us one of the songs of Zion.'

> O no! we have nor voice nor hand,
> For such a song, in such a land![4]

The Chaldeans indeed, as may be gathered from many parts of Ezekiel and Daniel, found ample leisure and opportunity for indulgence in refined gratifications. But the music of the Israelites seems

[1] Jer. vii. 34. [2] Is. lxiv. 11. [3] Lament. iii. 63.
[4] Sir Philip Sidney's 'Psalmes of David.'

to have been either entirely neglected during this mournful period, or cherished with listless languor. And thus, when they returned to Jerusalem, they had to lament the decay as well of their musical, as of their architectural glory. No attempt had been made by the few Jews that remained, to uphold it. 'All joy was darkened, the mirth of the land was gone.'[1] Instead of the two hundred and eighty eight vocal, and four thousand instrumental performers that composed the choir in David's time, the number of 'singers, the children of Asaph' now amounted to no more than a hundred and twenty eight, who, with their assistants made only a total of 'two hundred singing-men and singing-women,' among whom are plainly included instrumental performers; and that out of a population of fifty thousand souls.[2] These were first scattered among the cities in the country; but in the seventh month after their arrival, 'the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem,' 'to offer burnt-offerings;' at which solemnity, as we have seen, the assistance of musicians was especially required. When moreover the foundation of the temple was laid, 'the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, were appointed to praise the Lord after the ordinance of David king of Israel. And they sung together by course, in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever towards Israel.'[3]

Nehemiah also employed their services, 'at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, . . . to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings, and with singing, with cymbals, psalteries, and with

[1] Isaiah xxiv. 11. [2] Ezra ii. 41. 65. [3] Ezra iii. 10, 11.

harps.' He 'appointed two great companies of them that gave thanks; whereof one went on the right hand upon the wall, preceded by Ezra the scribe, with certain of the priests with trumpets, and others with the musical instruments of David the man of God, . . . and the other company of them that gave thanks went over against them, followed by Nehemiah himself, and the half of the people upon the wall. . . . So stood the two companies of them that gave thanks in the house of God. . . . And the singers sang loud, and the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off.'[1] And we meet continually with instances of his anxious desire to dignify the music of the temple, in imitation of 'David and Asaph of old, in whose days, there were chief of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God.'[2]

The civil wars, oppressions, factions, and invasions which continually harassed the Jewish state, till after the commencement of the Christian æra, sufficiently account for the silence of all testimony respecting the music of the Jews, during the remaining period of their history. Life itself was at stake: why should they trouble themselves with its refinements? Human passion, the real object of the nation's worship, required sterner and more bloody sacrifices than the freewill offering of a grateful thanksgiving. Hence music seems to have been cast aside, to await, amid contempt and negligence, happier and more peaceful times. Herod, indeed, acting in the spirit of his assumed character as an engrafter of heathen customs upon a Jewish stock, imported the Grecian games with the accompaniments of music and the dance; but the people were not so depraved as to be insensible to the insult. They rejected them with scorn,

[1] Neh. xii. 27—43. [2] Ibid. 46.

as practices opposed to 'the religion, laws, usages, and public opinions of their country.'[1]

The nature of the Jewish music at this period remains still a subject of bare speculation. Amid such general neglect of the art, a progressive improvement could hardly be expected; while on the other hand, the decline of the nation had probably not materially affected its character, which seems to have had little to recommend it, even under the most favourable circumstances. It does not appear that the Israelites possessed musical characters of any kind, without which it is no more possible to proceed far in musical composition, than in any intellectual science, where there are no signs to aid the memory and rivet the steps of advancement on a sure basis. The poverty of the synogogue music in the present day, which arises in a great measure from its entire dependence upon tradition and the mercy of the singers, may serve to exemplify this fact. The assertion, that the Hebrew Points were originally musical characters, seems to rest upon no foundation. The modern Jewish chanting, on the authority of a High Priest quoted by Burney, is an innovation, as all music, instrumental as well as vocal, had been banished the synagogue since the destruction of Jerusalem—the Jews, from a passage in the Prophets, deeming it unlawful to sing or rejoice before the coming of Messiah.[2] The chant, however, still cultivated among them, especially in Germany, is considered by the same Priest, from its resemblance to the Persian music, borrowed from the Jews, to preserve its ancient character.

Throughout the whole of the New Testament, we find music no where enjoined as a part of sacred

[1] Burney's Hist. Vol. I. p. 251.

[2] Ibid, p. 256.

worship; and hence its public use has been deemed inapplicable in the present dispensation. Such reasoning, however, can be based only upon the most glaring misapprehension of the design and scope of this portion of the Scriptures. The book itself informs us, in a few words, of the grand object it had in view. 'These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.'[1] Now it must be admitted that this simple design by no means necessarily embraced all the circumstantials of christian faith,—those rites and peculiar customs, which, while they serve to inspirit devotion, are but accidental to its sincere profession. As a guide to everlasting life, the New Testament proclaims in every page the perfection of its divine Author; but if we expect it to assume the character of a christian encyclopædia, the most tortuous examiner of its precepts must find himself continually at a stand, and be tempted to dishonour the attributes of God, through the insufficiency of His Word. What is therein declared as essential to salvation, must be implicitly believed, and steadily acted upon; what is neither enjoined nor forbidden, is evidently left free for adoption or rejection, according to the circumstances of individual believers. If we desire, however, to seek for direction upon non-essential points, instead of wresting the Scriptures from their original purpose to suit a private interpretation, it were surely better to recur to the customs of a former dispensation, and implicitly adopt the injunctions delivered by Him, 'who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' We have already seen that instrumental as well as vocal music was commanded to the Jews: we find no

[1] John xx. 31.

prohibition under the christian dispensation ;—what conclusion therefore more natural, than that an art enjoined for adoption in His service, and never annulled by a God whose counsels are everlasting, may convey, with its sacred dedication, the same blessing to the soul of the Christian, as to the soul of the Israelite !

Thus, were not a word uttered in the New Testament in favour of sacred music, we should still deem its introduction into our services, to be in strict conformity with the will of God, and the edification of man. We find however, that our blessed Lord sanctioned it by His own example, the very night of His betrayal, ' singing a hymn with His disciples ; '[1] and if it be objected, that He did it merely in accordance with the observances of the law, to which he rigidly adhered, we can point to the practices and injunctions of His immediate Apostles, after the modelling of a Christian church. It is the express command of St. Paul, that believers should ' teach and admonish one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in their hearts to the Lord.'[2] St. James in a marked manner distinguishes prayer from song, ' Is any afflicted, let him pray ; is any merry, let him sing psalms.'[3] So also St. Paul : ' I will pray with the spirit, I will pray with the understanding also. I will sing with the spirit, I will sing with the understanding also.'[4] That their practice accorded with their admonitions, we see in the example of Paul and Silas, who ' in the prison, prayed and sang praises unto God.'[5] Nor was this merely a private practice. St. Paul expressly mentions the use of psalms in public worship.[6] And the well-known testimony of Pliny the younger, who, in this particular, may be supposed to give an unbiassed statement, is conclusive

[1] Matt. xxvi. 30. [2] Colos. iii. 16. Ephes. v. 19. [3] James v. 13.
[4] 1 Cor. xiv. 15. [5] Acts xvi. 25. [6] 1 Cor. xiv. 26.

of the fact, that from the earliest times the Christians made the singing of hymns a prominent part of their services. To the same effect is a passage from Justin Martyr, who flourished in the second century. 'Approving ourselves grateful to God, by celebrating His praises with hymns and other solemnities.'[1]

Of the species of musical compositions applied to their hymns, we are necessarily ignorant. As the Christians increased in number and intelligence, their music, derived originally from Jewish practice, would doubtless be affected by the influence of Pagan predilections. This idea is confirmed by the hymnology of the primitive church, the poetry of which, both as to construction and metre, partakes strongly of a Pagan original. But however that may be, it is evident, that for many ages, the chant was devoid of that full, regular, and symphonic character which it now assumes. There is no ground to suppose that the early Christians had surmounted the ignorance of the nations around them, respecting the modern essentials of musical composition, counterpoint, notation, and admeasurement of time. Their music seems to have been little more than an arbitrary and extempore application of sound to syllables, with hardly any other restraint, than attention to rhythm and accent.

This unshackled species of music may be well calculated to accompany poetry when committed to a solitary performer, whose 'hand sings to the voice.' The ready fluency of thought and expression, accommodating every tone to the natural play of the passions, never for a moment violating the strict union between rhythm and accent, and thus literally 'wedding music to immortal verse,' may be conceived,

[1] Burney's Hist. Vol. II. p. 3.

especially when applied to subjects of intense interest, to have had an influence totally unknown to our more ingenious and elaborate compositions. The hyperbolical effects attributed to the Grecian melodies, are thus brought within the range of probability. Our modern music, chained down as it is to artificial rules, which restrain the natural fervour, and often make the idea subservient to the sound, cannot be expected so powerfully and spontaneously to operate upon the feelings. And yet however effective this recitative style for an extempore or dramatic performance, certain it is that it never could be adapted for a varied and indiscriminate chorus. The very licence which might display to advantage the genius of a sprightly improvisatore, enabling him to pour his strains into the mould of his poetry, would grievously impede the united voices of a multitude, no two of which in talent, compass, execution, or taste, could be supposed so nearly to resemble each other, as to prevent discord and confusion. Such, however, seems to have been the music of the primitive Christians. They sang indeed together, giving to each syllable its distinct note, but that note determined in a great measure by the fancy of the ear, or the compass of the voice, preserved from sinking into absolute chaos, by some rude symbol of marking pauses. The synagogue music, already referred to, may possibly present the best popular idea of the manner in which our fathers, for many centuries, chanted the services of the church. Nor have we any reason to imagine that the strains, which called forth the rapturous expressions of St. Augustine, had acquired any regular melody and harmonious combination. There was, however, an accordance of hearts if not of voices. We have it on the best authority, that the early Christians experienced high delight in their Psalmody, and not having

their ears refined to a more correct and concordant standard, found what we should term musical incongruities, no hinderance to an elevated devotion.[1]

It is vain to seek for any distinct ritual, before the time of Constantine, though Romanist writers fearlessly assert that St. Peter settled the order of the mass. At this period, upon the authority of Eusebius, music was established in the church, a regular choir appointed, the services arranged, and hymns used at Antioch, though we have no further information of its progress and improvement. From the same city, in the reign of Theodosius, St. Ambrose introduced into his church at Milan the chant termed after him the Ambrosian chant. As no vestiges of it remain, it is hopeless to attempt to define the exact merits of his improvements. So much is certain, that it still retained the same rhythmical character noticed as the distinguishing mark of the Jewish music. The effect produced by it is described in glowing language by the fathers—unbelievers won to receive the truth—the common people captivated—and the faithful, according to S. Augustine, 'finding it a way of mutual consolation and exhortation, with a joint harmony of voices and hearts,' thus answering the design of its introduction, in the words of the same writer, that 'the people might not languish and pine away with a tedious sorrow.'[2]

During the great Arian controversy, processional singing was introduced by the heretics, which, though in use among the Pagans, had been hitherto unknown in the Christian church.

From this period to the time of Gregory the Great, church music seems to have undergone no change deserving of notice. Gregory devoted himself sedu-

[1] Burney's Hist. Vol. II. p. 5. [2] Ibid, p. 7.

lously to its improvement, and from him the Gregorian chant derives its name. He increased the ecclesiastical modes from four to eight. He adopted the Roman character instead of the Greek. He introduced a new species of chanting termed from its gravity, Canto Fermo; ' in which the notes were either all of a length, as in our psalmody, or at least of no stated measure, as in our Cathedral service.' Hence he totally destroyed that rhythmical character which had designated the chant for so many centuries, and hesitated not to sacrifice mere effect to concord and solemnity. He settled the liturgy by canons, and having selected the early ecclesiastical chants, arranged them in the order afterwards generally adopted throughout the West.[1] To remove prejudices and conciliate opposers, he adopted many Greek and Hebrew terms in addition to those already in use, such as the Kyrie Eleeson and Hallelujah.[2] He encouraged the cultivation of church music, by establishing a singing school, which continued three hundred years after his death, at which time were still to be seen the whip used by him for correction, and the couch on which he reposed when visiting the school.[3] The square characters termed Gregorian notes, if not invented by him, were at an early period applied to his chants.[4]

These and similar improvements were by no means universally adopted. The schism between the Eastern and Western branches of the general church, prevented the former from profiting by the inventions of the latter. For many ages therefore they retained their original barbarisms; nor was it till the beginning of the seventeenth century that the Russians admitted the modern method of writing music, and

[1] Burney's Hist. Vol. II. p. 15.
[2] Ibid. p. 13, note.
[3] Ibid. p. 16, note.
[4] Ibid. p. 34.

established an uniform liturgy. In the last century a notation, peculiar to the inhabitants, was still in use in the Greek Isles, which, 'with all the improvements of St. John Damascenus, is said by an able judge, to be more complicated and obscure than even the ancient.' [1]

The jealousy of innovation manifested by the heads of the Western church, confined music for a long period to the plain melodies of Gregory. Till the invention of counterpoint, no material alteration seems to have been hazarded. Before however we proceed to this important discovery, it may be well to glance at the progress of instrumental music, with which it is nearly connected.

Although instrumental music seems not to have generally obtained in the Christian services before the time of Constantine, yet evidence is not wanting, that from the earliest times it was in occasional use, and uncultivated rather from want of opportunity, than actual disesteem, or conscientious scruple. Thus Clemens Alexandrinus—'Though we no longer worship God with the clamour of military instruments, such as the trumpet, drum and fife, but with peaceful words, this is our most delightful festivity: and if you are able to accompany your voices with the lyre or cithara, you will incur no censure.' And again, 'Ye shall imitate the great Hebrew king, whose actions were acceptable to God,' quoting at the same time the passage—'Rejoice, ye righteous, in the Lord; praise becomes the just—praise ye the Lord on the cithara, and on the psaltery with ten strings.' [2] Afterwards Eusebius thus describes its public use—'When they (the Christians) are met, they act as the Psalm prescribes. First, they confess their sins to the Lord:

[1] Burney's Hist. Vol. II. pp. 47, 48. [2] Ibid. p. 26.

Secondly, they sing to his name, not only with the voice, but upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the cithara.' St. Augustine, reprobating dancing as a Sabbath employment, contrasts it with 'singing of Psalms to the lyre or psaltery as virgins and matrons were wont to do.'[1] It is evident, from these passages, that instrumental music in itself was not shunned, though the lyre and harp were deemed better suited to religious purposes, than more boisterous accompaniments. The indiscriminate use of instruments became afterwards a source of temptation; and perhaps a too great fondness for the art allured some to theatrical indulgences. This led to the severe rebuke of the early fathers of the church, although they ever, in the most vehement of their denunciations, distinguished the use from the abuse. Thus Clemens Alexandrinus in the second century complained that 'many after they had departed from the church, delighted themselves abroad with wicked measures and amorous songs, and were filled with the noise of pipes—about whom cymbals, and dulcimers, and the instruments of deceit are sounding.' Still he adds, 'Modest and chaste harmonies are to be admitted, by removing as far as may be all soft effeminate music, which with a dishonest art of warbling the voice, do lead to a voluptuous kind of life.' Thus also Lactantius in the fourth century, while he condemns 'sweet and polite verses,' recommends 'such as love music, to let it be a pleasant thing to hear the praises of God.' St. Basil recommends 'psalms of confession' in the place of 'songs enticing to lust.' St. Chrysostom—'As they who bring stage-players and harlots into their feasts do call in devils thither; so they who bring in the Psalms of David with his

[1] Burney's Hist. Vol. II. p. 27.

harp do call in Christ by him.' 'We do not prohibit,' adds he, 'the voice of praise, but the voice of absurdity and confusion.'

As the use of improper instruments was discouraged, so also the misapplication of those which were suited to a devotional spirit. St. Jerome complains—'that which David made for the worship of God, inventing musical instruments, you transfer to pleasure and luxury.'[1] Still, although thus severely enforced, the simplicity of earlier times soon yielded to the encroachments of fancy or taste, and the church became less fastidious in her choice of instrumental accompaniments.

Strange as it should seem, despite the variety of instruments and voices, we have no evidence that, prior to the eleventh century, there existed any knowledge of performance in parts. According to the most approved opinion, the music of the first ages of the church consisted in a plain or simple chant of unisons or octaves. The chief distinction is supposed to have been, that the hymns were sung by one voice, and the psalms by the whole congregation.[2] Counterpoint, or the science of musical harmonies, was utterly unknown even to the ancient Greeks, who were the most devoted favourers of music, and among whom the study of the trifling intricacies and ingenious difficulties, with which their systems abounded, was the labour of a life.

It is however improbable, that the science of harmonizing or performing in parts, by which each voice or instrument should consist of a separate melody, and yet all harmonize in one, was the result of any single invention. Nature has ever presented examples from which to model an imitation; and it

[1] Bedford's Abuse of Musick, pp. 44—60.
[2] Burney's Hist. Vol. II. p. 25.

cannot be imagined, that the ancients could be totally ignorant of the harmonic intervals involved in every round and clear tone, like that produced by the stroke of a bell, which as it dies away, to an exercised and attentive ear, as clearly steps from one interval to another, as if acted upon by some mechanical impulse. But even supposing that this fundamental law of concordant intervals, manifested in every musical tone, as well as in harmonics, or the natural division and vibration of strings into aliquot parts, had for ages thus passed unnoticed, the casual conjunction of inartificial sounds must early have suggested the possibility of so modelling and applying them, as to effect a systematic combination. The singing of birds in a wood, the murmur of the breeze among the leaves of a forest, the roaring of the waves of the sea, the moaning of the wind in a crevice, the roll of distant thunder, might by accidental contact produce rude harmony, like the chords of an Æolian harp, and thus induce man by his voice to attempt an imitation, and by his reasoning powers to methodize the results of his experiments. However slowly, therefore, the general science attained consistency and form, there can be little doubt, but the more common musical chords were both known and practised at an early age. Who first attempted to reduce them to a system, cannot now with certainty be determined. The merit is generally assigned to Guido, a monk of Aretinum, (1022. A. C.) though Burney adduces examples to show, that his experiments were far below 'the regions of pure harmony, and such as the ear could not now tolerate.'[1] A variety of subordinate inventions have been also attributed to him, and there can be no question but his services to the cause of music were

[1] Burney's Hist. Vol. II. p. 78.

great. 'An obscure monk, whose merit could penetrate the sovereign pontiff's palace without cabal of interested protectors ; whose writings in less than a century should be quoted as authorities for musical doctrines in parts of Europe very remote from the place of his residence ; at a time when the intercourse between one nation and another was not facilitated by travelling, commerce, or the press, and during one of the darkest periods in the history of the human mind, such an one must have conferred benefits on society which cannot be esteemed inconsiderable ; since in spite of all these disadvantages, they could so suddenly extend their effects, and interest the most polished and intelligent part of mankind.' [1]

The introduction of organs into churches, and the method of organizing or descant, by which the unornamented notes of the plain chant were accompanied by variations upon one voice, or in one part, formed a great step towards the perfection of the science. Already in the sixth century, the wind organ began to supersede the hydraulicon, or water organ, an instrument of very high antiquity. The services thus rendered to counterpoint appeared in the latter end of the eighth century, about which time, 'frequent attempts at a bagpipe kind of harmony' are preserved in ancient missals and musical tracts. And though the instrument remained for ages in a most rude and imperfect state, it must have been found highly serviceable, when in the eleventh and succeeding centuries, the rich stores of musical harmonies, concealed from the foundation of the world, became gradually unfolded. Descant is still retained in the Romish church, though it has yielded precedence to the more refined and elaborate improvements of the day. In

[1] Burney's Hist. Vol. II. pp. 106, 107.

the time of Rousseau, it was so successfully cultivated by some musicians, that 'they could lead off and even carry on fugues extempore, when the subject allowed it, without confounding or encroaching on the other parts, or committing a single fault in the harmony.' It was greatly furthered by the labours of Franco de Cologne, in the eleventh century, and Walter Odington, a monk of Evesham in Worcestershire. Thus counterpoint began in the church, by adding parts to the plain chant, and by harmonizing and interweaving variations upon approved tunes.[1]

In the eleventh century, the formation of the time table, or 'system of musical signs and characters, to imply different portions of time,' a discovery of high importance, contributed to perfect the practice of counterpoint. Among the ancients, as has been observed, rhythm and accent were in strict subserviency to the laws of syllabic arrangement. They had in effect only two kinds of notes, ¯ ˘ answering to a long and short syllable, which formed the solitary guide for time and movement in music. This was also generally the case in the church, even after characters were invented, till the adoption of lines in the tenth century. No characters existed for more than two species of notes. Till the invention of musical signs for time, music in parts must have 'consisted of simple counterpoint, as in our parochial psalmody, note being set against note, or sounds of equal length, which was at first the case with extemporary descant.'[2]

But when instrumental music was freed from a slavish application to syllables, some regulation of the length of sounds became necessary, not only in simple melody, but more especially in written descant,

[1] Burney's Hist. Vol. II. pp. 137—142. [2] Ibid. pp. 167, 168.

and florid counterpoint. 'The meaning, beauty, and energy of a series of sounds depend upon the manner in which they are measured and accented;' and of such importance is 'time in music, that it is able to give point even to the repetition of the same sound;' as that of a drum or bell, which, by expression or change of movement, seems to produce different tones, though identically the same. The division of instrumental music into parts, and the use of florid counterpoint required, for the sake of order and effect, some more distinct division of time, than the mere accentuation of a long or short syllable.[1]

The invention of musical characters for time is ascribed to Franco de Cologne. He seems, however, rather to have been the first approved author on measured music, than the inventor; as, upon credible testimony, 'if music was at that time not measured, it was approaching towards measure.' Before him, divisions were practised in Canto Fermo, where the Perielesis and Neuma, or recapitulation of the chant of a mode at the close, had been long in use.[2]

Till the middle of the fifteenth century, little more is to be observed respecting the progress of music in the Church. We have seen it burst the bud which had hitherto so closely confined its genuine properties, and unfold timidly its promise of perfection. No wonder if for some time its form was obscure and undefined. It had difficulties to contend with, arising from national habits and prejudices; and it was not till the important improvements noted above had become firmly rooted, that it encouraged native talent, to aid and accelerate its growth.

The general resemblance visible in the church music of all the nations under the spiritual dominion

[1] Burney's Hist. Vol. II. p. 169.

[2] Ibid. p. 173, note.

of Rome, till the Reformation, is accounted for by her zeal in sending missionaries to instruct in the art. According to venerable Bede, 'our British ancestors were indebted to St. Germanus for the introduction of the rites of the Gallican church, and heard him sing Allelujah many years prior to St. Austin.' The latter, upon his arrival, came with his companions 'in procession to their first audience of king Ethelbert, in the isle of Thanet, singing litanies; and when they entered the city of Canterbury they sung a litany, and at the end of it Allelujah.' In the seventh century, Pope Agatho dispatched John, precentor of St. Peter's at Rome, to teach singing to the monks of Weremouth, an opportunity for improvement of which the 'masters of music' in the north diligently availed themselves. Before the establishment of a singing school at Canterbury, Rome was the great resort of all the English who sought an acquaintance with Church Music. The reign of Alfred was propitious to its cultivation. Like the royal Psalmist, he was himself a considerable proficient on the harp; and so eager was he to rest his improvements upon a sure basis, that he is said to have founded a professorship of the science at Oxford. St. Dunstan, who flourished in the next century, presented several churches with organs, besides rendering other essential services to the cause of sacred music; and was himself 'so skilful, that he was accused of magic, because he made a harp which played without human assistance.'[1] In the chants of the Church, which constituted the principal music of the dark ages, our ancestors were not inferior to their continental contemporaries. The works of Chaucer, which abound in musical allusions, evidence the high estimation in

[1] Burney's Hist. Vol. II. pp. 56—65.

which the art was held in the fourteenth century. His account of the instruments then in use, show that the English had added to their original harp, the psaltery, trumpet, clarion, bagpipe, lute, gitterne, rote, or hurdy-gurdy, fidel, and organ. Though we possess no English music in parts, so early as his time, yet his description of a concert of birds would seem to evince an acquaintance with full services.

> And everiche song in his wise,
> The most swete and solempne service
> By note, that ever man I trowe,
> Had herde; for some of them songe lowe,
> Some high, and all of one accord.[1]

Though Henry V. discouraged music, it revived under the turbulent reign of his successor, when it was observed that even vagrant minstrels were better paid than the clergy.[2] Edward IV. so far favoured it, as to give it a permanent establishment, and incorporate its professors. In his reign flourished the two celebrated English musicians, Dunstable and Hambois; upon the latter of whom the University of Oxford conferred the degree of Doctor in Music. When the honour was first granted is uncertain. It is evident that in this age the profession held a respectable rank in society.

This and the succeeding century, in which the knowledge of counterpoint extended itself, 'delighted in difficult trifles, and composers seemed more ambitious to please the eye than the ear. Theories, systems and hypotheses of distant times remain, and are more intelligible than useful; but how all the didactic and theoretic musical treatises now produced, operated upon practice, we know not; the successful application of their theories being wrapt in as great

[1] Burney's Hist. Vol. II, p. 380. [2] Ibid. p. 397.

obscurity, as the cause of the destruction of their compositions.'[1]

Two improvements, however, must be noted. The discovery by our countryman Dunstable, of florid counterpoint, or figurative harmony, 'consisting of three or four different melodies moving together in consonance;' and the admission, preparation, and resolution of discords. The use of discords was suggested to the mind of some bold innovator, to relieve satiety, sharpen the taste, and arouse attention, 'that by giving the ear a momentary uneasiness and keeping it in suspense, its delight might be enhanced by the solution of the discordant difficulty.'[2] Thus in all objects of interest, a judicious contrast is essential to sustain enjoyment, and an unvaried uniformity even in the most exquisite delights productive of disgust and weariness.

It may be imagined that the innovations, thus slowly introduced, would be regarded with suspicion by such as opposed the authority of antiquity to all attempts at improvement. Thus already in the twelfth century, John of Salisbury denounced the mode of harmonizing the plain chant, then in its infancy, as calculated 'to corrupt the mind by wanton modulations, effeminate inflexions, and frittered notes and periods, even in the penetralia, or awful sanctuary itself.'[3] In 1322, a bull of Pope John XXII. was fulminated against the use of it, in which he speaks of the advocates of these innovations, as men 'who attending to the new notes and new measures of the disciples of the new school, would rather have their ears tickled with semibreves and minims,[4] and such

[1] Burney's Hist. Vol. II. p. 427. [2] Ibid. pp. 451—461.
[3] Ibid. p. 150.

[4] The reader must remember, that the time of the minim has since then been thrown back by the admission of yet more 'frivolous inventions,' such as crotchets, quavers, semi, and even demi-semiquavers; so

frivolous inventions, than hear the ancient ecclesiastical chant.'[1] And in the next century, Antoninus, Archbishop of Florence, complains of its unfitness for divine service, 'as it rather tended to flatter the ear than cherish piety and devotion.'[2]

Thus these decided improvements were effected in defiance of the prejudices of the Romish priesthood, who, at the same time that they were the chief patrons of the art, viewed with great jealousy any novel and strange invention, and listened with breathless anxiety to every noise, lest it should be the precursor of some formidable heresy to overthrow their fabric of self-named orthodoxy. This jealousy can alone account for the prolonged degradation of music, under the avowed patronage of the most powerful men in Europe, kings enlisting themselves under the spiritual banner of Rome, and not only encouraging the exercise of the chant among their subjects, but employing much time themselves in its acquisition, and even condescending 'to quit their places at mass, and join the choirmen in performing the service at their desks.' Such royal choristers were the Emperor Charles V. of Germany, Charles IX, and Henry III. of France.[3] Thus our Henry VIII. is said to have composed two entire masses, which were frequently sung in his chapel; though he did not confine him-

that what was originally the shortest and most rapid note, as the word implies, is now noted for its length and stateliness. Yet even in the time of Spencer, the minim does not seem to have set its primal signification.

> Pardon the shepheard, mongst so many layes,
> As he hath sung of thee in all his dayes,
> To make one *minime* of thy poore handmayd.
>
> Faery Queene, Book VI. C. X. St. 28.ga

The original notes found by John XXII. were the Longa, Brevis, Larga —to which 'the disciples of the new school' added the Semibrevis, and Mimima. See Bedford's Temple Musick, p. 227.

[1] Burney's Hist. Vol. II. p. 213. [2] Ibid. p. 141.
[3] Ibid. p. 574.

self to sacred music, as in his early life he spent much time at the flute, virginals, 'in setting of songes, and making of ballades.'[1]

As, before the Reformation, the principal patron of music was the Church, it is easy to see why the art sped equally under the same disadvantages, in Italy, France, Spain, Germany, Flanders, and England. The plain chant and the descant built upon that foundation, applied to the same language, the Latin, was in effect the only kind of authorised ecclesiastical music in Europe. The Papal chapel, and the Court of Rome, were the great fountain of the art in the middle ages. Whatever innovation they admitted was borne in the vessels of commerce to the Hanseatic towns and the Netherlands; and, being there successfully cultivated, was finally, by the aid of printing, soon dispersed over Europe.[2]

Music, having thus slowly developed itself, and, by the most important discoveries, laid the foundation of its present state of perfection, one step, and that an essential one, was yet requisite to afford scope for its operations. It had been unhappily, for so many ages, wrapt up in the blighting infallibility of the Romish church. Its eyes were now beginning to open, and it saw that no greater curse can happen to any art, than an assumption of infallibility,—an eternal wedlock with error. It hailed therefore the reformation in doctrine, as its deliverer from thraldom. Having once ventured to think for themselves, men beheld with amazement to what extent they had subjected their minds. Not only had they been slumbering upon the dogmas of a tyrannical hierarchy, but reason itself which distinguished them from brutes had been abandoned,—their very tastes had been voluntarily

[1] Burney's Hist. Vol. II. pp. 572, 573. [2] Ibid. p. 584.

surrendered,—and the great mother of abominations upon her seven hills had repressed, as well the temporal gifts of God, as the spiritual hopes of man.

Once freed from the anathemas of Rome, music girded itself anew, and advanced with the light step of a liberated captive. The invention of the art of printing most opportunely seconded the emancipation of the mind. The treatises upon musical science, which had hitherto been locked up in Latin, and studied only by the clergy, now became common property; and thus the new inventions were gradually engrafted upon the plain chant of the Romish church. Unhappily, however, they were introduced with too indiscriminate a zeal. The wholesome jealousy alluded to above, seemed suddenly removed; and a style admitted, which tended to obscure whatever was generally intelligible in the existing ritual. The edification of the people, indeed, appears at no time to have been the main design in the Romish services, and was therefore not likely to influence the introduction of musical innovations. Music was evidently employed as a mere ecclesiastical machine; and as such, the most involved and intricate harmonies, clouding the sense of Scripture, seemed best to subserve the purposes of a crafty priesthood, by subjecting the external senses to the mere power of sound, and thus lulling the conscience by the combined force of religious ignorance, and carnal delight. 'Abstruse harmonical proportions, which had neither common sense, nor in this case a better judge, the approbation of the common ear for their support, were universally and diligently studied. Hence arose a multifarious contexture of parts, a total disregard of simple melody, and in consequence a neglect even of syllabic distinction; insomuch that notes originally set to any words, in any language, might readily be adapted to

different words in that or any other; being also totally inexpressive of sentiment, they were as well, or rather as ill, calculated to answer the purpose of praise as of penitence, of sorrow as of joy. This intricate music had, at the Reformation, taken possession of the whole church service; it not only was joined to the psalmodical or supplicatory part, but even with those few fragments of Scripture which were selected from the New Testament, and admitted into the Liturgy, under the title of Epistle and Gospel; these were all sung, not merely in simple intonation or chant, but in this mode of figurate descant, in which the various voices following one another, according to the rules of an elaborate canon, were perpetually repeating different words at the same time.'[1]

This mode of overwhelming music under a multiplicity of unmeaning sounds, ranged and wrought out according to set unchangeable rules, proceeded in a great measure from a mistaken idea which early obtained, that it was 'a concomitant of the mathematics.' In the middle ages it was thus classed as a species under a genus, being included in the Quadrivium, or four branches of the mathematics,—arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy. A taste for the one seemed to be considered essentially combined with a talent for the other.

It is however difficult to conceive why the mere acute apprehension, conception, or memory of musical sound must necessarily be connected with a taste for abstract science. The internal mechanism of the art is indeed sufficiently complex to exercise the powers of a mathematical mind. No musician, however nice his perception, can advance far in the study of mu-

[1] Mason's Essays on Church Music, p. 87—90.

sical theories, without some taste for abstruse calculations. Still it is easy to conceive a mind, wholly indisposed to such studies, from the mere natural force of genius, high imagination, and intense feeling, pouring forth the richest and most vigorous conceptions—irregular it may be, and occasionally grating upon the ear of the fastidious theorist, but—sufficiently decisive of a powerful musical talent. That a taste for mathematics is of service to a practical musician cannot be denied. It assists him to prepare his ideas for the public ear, to prune his wild shoots, to correct irregularities, to chasten false ornaments, to smoothe down harshnesses, to determine what is ill-defined, and to reconsider what is ill-digested. Thus mathematics bear the same relation to music, as logic to poetry. Still they form but the scaffolding, and not the actual building. A taste for adapting an art for use, is totally different from a taste for the art itself. And it is just as absurd to assert, that no man can be a poet without a taste for logic, as that no true musician can exist devoid of a taste for mathematics.

It was, however under the influence of this erroneous idea that our forefathers, in the study of music as a science, seemed utterly regardless of the gratification of the ear, and were content to speculate upon the accidentals of the art, 'harmonics, the ratio of musical intervals and philosophy of sound.' Having once satisfied themselves, that a taste for mathematics and a taste for music were the same thing, they worked out their musical conceptions, like problems, crowded their papers with notes, arranged fitly according to rank, and marching in files, and boldly defended the position of each by a reference to rule. Yet these musical mathematicians, after having completed their arrangements, till their paper resembled a field of battle, wondered that their men, diligently trained

and orderly disposed, afforded so little pleasure, and produced so little effect in the day of actual trial. There was much ingenuity, but no feeling—much noise, but no music. They foresaw not the natural result of bending an art to the arbitrary authority of some science, not admitted as an auxiliary, but so essentially interwoven into its system, as to curb and even nullify the open play of unshackled genius. For long and wearisome years was the genuine nature of music as a science of sweet sounds overlooked, in this fondness for pedantic niceties, numerical calculations, and fancied paper congruities. Canons of difficult solution were to musicians a species of problem, and rather exercised the mind, than pleased the sense. Nor were they thoroughly aware of the inefficiency of their musical systems till Handel, who, if not the first, was the most powerful and original reformer, came upon them like another Buonaparte, exploded their antiquated tactics, dispersed their black regiments, and restored melody and harmony to their pristine authority over the thoughts and passions of mankind.

Burney fearlessly asserts that ' mathematics have so little to do with practical music, either in composition or performance, that those musicians, who are most ignorant of the ratio and philosophy of sound, seem constantly to have arrived at the highest degree of excellence in the selection, combination, and refinement of them in practice by the mere assistance of experience, and the gift of good ears and powerful nerves.' [1]

Italy continued, to the Reformation, the great emporium of church music. In the fifteenth century almost every mass was composed upon the subject of

[1] Burney's Hist. Vol. III. p. 93, note.

some well-known song or ballad ; but these airs admitted of no greater variety of modulation, than the ancient chants of the church, upon fragments of which, during the sixteenth and part of the seventeenth century, it was thought necessary to construct the basis of choral harmonies. Afterwards, by the imitation of dramatic music, the introduction of instruments, the use of transposed keys, and the supply of deficiencies in the scales, the church style of composition became much altered. And although time was wasted by the masters of the art in vain and speculative inquiries, yet improvements in harmony kept pace with melody, a distinction was sedulously preserved between secular and sacred music, and rich and complicated combinations added greatly to the solemnity of the Romish service.[1]

Of the German and French music at this period little need be remarked. Prior to the Reformation, an admirable style of psalmody had been adopted by the followers of John Huss, the Bohemian martyr, known by the name of the United Brethren, whose descendants in the present day [2] enrich their services by tunes of the same full, harmonious, and ecclesiastical character, which distinguished the compositions of their ancestors.

Having thus traced the progress of Church Music to the period of the Reformation, and watched the gradual developement of the several inventions which have formed the basis of the present system, we would now confine ourselves chiefly to the character it assumed under the Protestant establishment in our own country. The intricacies of the style, adopted by the Romish church, have been already noticed. After Henry VIIIth's rupture with the Pope,

[1] Burney's Hist. Vol. II. pp. 527—530.
[2] The United Brethren or Moravians.

the only change attempted in church music was to apply it to English words.[1] To effect this object, Henry himself voluntarily lent his assistance, and translated certain prayers, litanies, and processions, with the command that they should be 'said or sung.' He also imposed upon Cranmer the duty of adjusting the litany to the chant, having first translated the prayers into English. 'The judgment whereof,' says that reformer, 'I refer wholly to your Majesty, and after your Highness has corrected it, if your Grace command some devout and solemn note to be made thereunto (as is to the procession which your Majesty has already set forth in English), I trust it will much excite and stir the hearts of all men to devotion and goodness.' And after expressing his opinion, 'that the song made thereunto should not be full of notes, but, as near as may be, for every syllable a note, so that it may be sung distinctly and devoutly,' he instances that when the Latin note is sober and distinct enough, he has retained it, and merely 'travailled to make the verses in English. Nevertheless those that be cunning in singing, can make a much more solemn note thereto. I made them only for proof to see how English would do in a song.' This more 'cunning' attempt was afterwards made by John Marbeck, organist at Windsor, who, upon the death of his unstable master, set the whole Cathedral service to musical notes, having for his zeal in promoting the Reformation, been nearly anticipated in his labours by a martyr's crown.

The adoption of English instead of Latin words, was a very partial, though important change. Still the great evil of too intricate a style of music was of itself sufficient to invalidate the advantages

[1] Burney's Hist. Vol. II. p. 577.

derivable from the restoration of the vulgar tongue. Hence in 1536 a protestation was presented to the King from the clergy of the Lower House within the province of Canterbury, against 'the Fautes and Abuses of Religion,' in which they declare 'that synging and saying of mass, matins or even-song, is but rorying, howling, whystlyng, mummying, conjurying, and jogelyng, and the playing at the organys a foolish vanitie.' In this declaration we see symptoms of that indiscriminating spirit, which afterwards included good and evil in one sweeping censure. We find, however, that it did not correspond with the ideas of those in power; for three years after, Church Music is thus recommended in a book of ceremonies put forth by authority. 'The sober, discrete, and devout singing, music, and playing with organs, used in the church in the service of God, are ordained to move and stir the people to the sweetness of God's word, the which is there sung; and by that sweet harmony both to excite them to prayer and devotion, and also to put them in remembrance of the heavenly triumphant church, where is everlasting joy, continual laud, and praise to God.'[1]

[1] Burney's Hist. Vol. III. p. 2. Insulated passages have frequently been quoted from the writings of the Reformers, as conclusive of their disapprobation of instrumental and choral music. The whole tenour of their conduct however, clearly evinces that their objections respected simply the prevalent abuses. Thus in the Homily of the Time and Place of Prayer II. a summary inference has been drawn from the following passage, as though it argued a disapprobation of chanting, and organ playing. It supposes a conversation between two women. 'Alas Gossip,' says the one, 'what shall we now do at church, since all the saints are taken away, since all the goodly sights we were wont to have are gone, since we cannot hear the like piping, singing, chaunting, and playing upon the organs, that we could before.' To which is the general reply, 'But, dearly beloved, we ought greatly to rejoice and give God thanks, that our churches are delivered out of all those things, which displeased God so sore, and filthily defiled his holy house and place of prayer.' They who would deduce from this passage that instrumental music was in itself denounced, must admit that vocal is also included

The reign of Edward VI. is especially worthy of notice, as the period when metrical psalmody was first introduced into the country. Already in the preceding reign an attempt was made at a metrical version of the Psalms by Sternhold, whom, Fuller states, to have been esteemed at that time an excellent poet, though he adds, 'he who wore bayes then, deserves not ivie now.' Till this time, parish churches seem to have used the plain chant.

The principal change effected by Queen Mary, was again to apply Latin words to the existing compositions. Metrical psalmody had not as yet been generally received in parochial churches.

During the reign of Elizabeth, music was not only tolerated, but encouraged. She retained the musicians of her chapel establishment, and diligently practised the art herself, 'so far forthe as might become a Princesse, being able to sing or play on the lute prettily and sweetly.'[1] Her decided approbation is evidenced in her injunctions to the clergy, in which she declares her resolution to continue the use of music in the church, and at the same time discountenance its abuse. 'She also willeth and commandeth, that there may be a modest and distinct song, so used in all parts of the common prayers of the church, that the same may be plainly understood, as if it were without singing; and yet nevertheless for the comforting of such as delight in musick, it may be permitted, that in the beginning or end of common prayer, either morning or evening, there may be sung an hymn, or such like

in the same condemnation, since singing is classed with those other things, the simple use of which is understood by such interpreters to have been considered as sorely displeasing to God. It is, however, evident from the same Homily, that both vocal and instrumental music are adjudged to be 'decently retained in the church, as things which God is either honoured with, or his people edified by.'

[1] Camden. Burney's Hist. Vol. III. p. 13.

song, to the praise of Almighty God, in the best melody and musick that may conveniently be devised, having respect, that the sentence of the hymn may be perceived and understood.' 'No mention,' as Heylin observes, 'is here made of singing David's Psalms in metre, though afterwards they thrust out the hymns that are herein mentioned.'

In this reign, a violent attack was made upon Church Music, and it seemed in great danger of almost total annihilation. The convolved and pedantic character of the so-termed 'curious singing' had been carried to such a length, as shortly before to draw down the censure of the Council of Trent, and became absolutely insupportable to the puritans in Queen Elizabeth's time. Thus Burnet informs us, that it was proposed to the Lower House, as one of six articles that the use of organs be removed;' and that the proposition was rejected 'by a majority of only one vote, by the proxy of an absent person.'[1] In 'a request of all true Christians in the House of Parliament,' thus pray the puritans:—'That all cathedral churches may be put down, where the service of God is grievously abused by piping with organs, singing, ringing, and trowling of psalms from one side of the choir to another, with the squeaking of chaunting choristers, disguised (as are all the rest) in white surplices; some in corner caps and sillycopes, imitating the fashion and manner of the Antichristian Pope, that man of sin and child of perdition, with his other rabble of miscreants and shavelings.'[2]

The singing of Psalms had now become general, and so approved itself to popular taste, that every other kind of music excited the same hatred, which

[1] Burnet's History of the Reformation, Part II, Book VI.
[2] Burney's Hist. Vol. III. p. 29.

was meted out to the heresies of the Romish church. Although 'metrical psalmody in slow notes of equal length had its origin in Germany,'[1] congregational singing was no invention of the Reformers. It was the renewal of a practice adopted in the earlier ages of the church, which had indeed decayed amid the general corruption, but which was ever renewed with the least semblance of real religion. Thus the Albigenses, during the hottest season of their persecutions, are represented as cheering themselves in the very prospect of death, with singing the psalms and hymns of their church. In the same manner, the disciples of Wickliff and John Huss cherished psalmody, as richly conducing to godliness. The Bohemian Brethren published a hymn book with notes, from which it is evident that 'the melodies therein used, originated in the chaunts to which the ancient Latin hymns of the church were sung.'[2] The reformers of the succeeding century, Luther, Cranmer, Calvin, Beza, Knox, and Zuinglius equally encouraged congregational psalmody. Among these however, Luther stands preeminent. He was a man of great musical talent, fostered by the opportunities afforded him in the Romish church, of which he seems to have availed himself with the same largeness of soul, which characterized his actions in a more important field of labour. The high estimation in which he held music, was the result of a cultivated taste, and accurate knowledge of mankind. 'I verily think,' said he, 'and am not ashamed to say that, next to divinity, no art is comparable to music.' 'We know that music is intolerable to demons.' With this idea, therefore, we need not wonder, that he made it a prominent feature

[1] Burney's Hist. Vol. III. p. 34. [2] Ibid. p. 31.

in his public services. The tunes introduced by him were of the same choral stamp as those of the United Brethren. The character given of them by Burney is worthy of attention, because he was not only well qualified to judge, from his superior knowledge, but was under no influence of partiality, as he shows himself throughout his works, an undisguised enemy to psalmodical compositions. 'If metrical psalms can ever be tolerated and defended, it must be in favour of such venerable melodies as these, which, when clothed in good harmony, have a solemnity of effect, that totally precludes any idea of secular music.'[1] Calvin brought unhappily to his psalmody the same hardness which is popularly ascribed to his general character. Without absolutely crushing it in the bud, he greatly shaded its beauty. The psalm tunes, which he admitted, were of the most unmeaning and monotonous kind, 'without harmony, variety of accent, rhythm, and the most constituent parts of mere melody.' Such was the popularity of Psalmody at this period that a partial version of the psalms by Clement Marot, obtained favour even at the court of France, and was universally sung to the most favourite melodies. Beza completed it, and as a social amusement it came into general estimation both among Reformers and Romanists.[2] As soon however, as it was admitted into the Psalm-book, Rome prohibited its use. The establishment of schools in every village throughout the reformed countries on the continent, contributed greatly to the encouragement of music, which thus became a part of common education.

In England, already in the reign of Henry VIII. 'psalms were much sung by all who loved the

[1] Burney's Hist. Vol. III. pp. 34—38. [2] Ibid. p. 42.

Reformation.' 'Some poets, such as the times afforded, translated David's Psalms into verse: and it was a sign by which men's affections to that work were every where measured, whether they used to sing these or not.'[1] A clause in the act of uniformity, 1548, authorized this practice: 'Provided also that it shall be lawful for all men, as well in churches, chapels, oratorios, or other places, to use openly any psalm or prayer taken out of the Bible, at any due time, not letting or omitting thereby the service, or any part thereof mentioned in the said book.' The general practice 'was to sing before and after morning and evening prayer, and also before and after the sermon.' When Sternhold's Psalms which had been at first 'composed for his own solace,' were completed by Hopkins and others, this clause in the act gave authority for their public use in the Church.[2] The allowance permitted to this version was, in the opinion of Heylin, 'rather a connivance than an approbation, no such allowance being any where found by such as have been most industrious and concerned in the search.' So great was the zeal with which the Reformers cultivated psalmody, that psalms and hymns are termed by Burney the opera songs of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In the year 1551, Roger Ascham thus writes from Augsburg: 'Three or four thousand singing at a time in a church of this city, is but a trifle.' According to Beza, the Huguenots at Paris assembled in the Prez aux Clercs, 'and did nothing for many nights but go about in great numbers singing psalms,' joined by the King and Queen of Navarre.[3] About the same time writes Bishop Jewel to Peter Martyr, 'A change now appears

[1] Burnet's Hist. Reformation, Part II. Book I.
[2] Burney's Hist. Vol. III. p. 50.
[3] Burnet's Hist. Reformation, Part II. Book II.

visible among the people; which nothing promotes more than the inviting them to sing psalms. This was begun in one church in London, and did quickly spread itself not only through the city, but in the neighbouring places: sometimes at Paul's cross, there will be six thousand people singing together.'[1] A quaint writer describes the effect of such performances upon himself, during the siege of York in the great rebellion. 'The organ being let out into all its fulness of stops, together with the quire, began the psalm. But when that vast concording unity of the whole congregational chorus came (as I may say) thundering in, even so as it made the very ground shake under us ('Oh the unutterable ravishing soul's delight!') in the which I was so transported, and rapt up into high contemplation, that there was no room left in my whole man, body and spirit, for any thing below divine and heavenly raptures.'[2]

The limits of this work do not permit a minute consideration of the comparative merits of the English ecclesiastical composers. Of those preceding the Reformation, who composed to Latin words, Burney, after an examination of their writings, gives this character—'Without any violation of the rules of harmony, there is such a total want of design, subject, melody, attention to the accent and meaning of the words, that the notes seem to be thrown upon paper at random: nor could they be more devoid of meaning, if the sounds of such keys as the pieces were written in, had issued from a mill, or been ballotted for in the Laputan manner.' Tallis and Bird, who may be called the fathers of our national church music, flourished in the reigns of Henry VIII. and

[1] Burnet's Hist. Reformation, Part III. Book VI.
[2] Burney's Hist. Vol. III. p. 62, note.

Elizabeth.[1] Morley, Giles Farnaby, and Dr. John Bull, were also musicians of name under Queen Elizabeth; but their compositions had a double portion of the intricacies and difficult contrivances of the age Loaded harmonies, however, did not ameliorate or atone for the insipidity of the original melodies. Bull's genius was not such as to burst the fetters of the prevalent taste. With the greatest labour, he has only proved himself 'to have entered deeper than his cotemporaries into all the arcana of the art, and pedantry of the times.' His character as a great musician is made to rest upon his being 'exquisitely skilled in canon:' and canons recte and retro, and perarsin and thesin, in triangular and other fantastical forms are carefully preserved as stupendous monuments of his abilities. The chief praise of the composers of the sixteenth century, may be said to consist in their equality with the best cotemporary musicians of the continent. It is vain to seek for grace, accent, taste, and rhythm in any of the productions of the time.

James I. though persuaded to increase the salaries of his musicians, seems to have had no inclination for the art. While the general character of secular productions during this period is heavy and unmeaning, the church furnished some compositions, sufficiently tolerable to prove that 'artful music may be produced at all times with less genius, than that which requires imagination as well as genius to support it; as it depends more on mechanical rules and labour than invention.'[2] The best composer during this reign was Orlando Gibbons.

Playford records of Charles I. that he 'could play his part exactly well on the bass viol, especially of

[1] Burney's Hist. Vol. III. p. 71. [2] Ibid, p. 327.

those incomparable phantasies of Mr. Coperario to the organ,' and that he promoted this science, in the service of Almighty God.'[1] Thus he encouraged it by charter. The most industrious composers for the church in this reign were Dr Child and Elway Bevin. In 1643, all ecclesiastical harmony but that of psalms, was suppressed; and during the Interregnum, no advance was made in the perfecting of cathedral and church music. In other respects, however, the art flourished in a degree superior to that of any former period. The time was come for simplifying harmony, and purifying melody, although the first attempts were not happy. Contrivance was relinquished without an equivalent. Simplicity was retained, but devoid of accent, grace, or invention. 'Melodies in general consisted of no more notes than syllables, while the treble accompaniment, if it subsisted, being in unison with the voice part, could occasion no embarrassment or confusion.'[2] At this period flourished the two Lawes, to one of whom Milton ascribes the honour of first subjecting the measure of the music to that of the words—

> ——whose tuneful and well-measured song
> First taught our English music how to span
> Words with just note and accent.[3]

These improvements may readily be supposed to have affected the compositions of the Church, as soon as the restoration of monarchy had swept away revolutionary prejudices. Yet much time was required to recruit exhausted strength, and restore the monuments of Cathedral music, which had been destroyed in the rebellion. Thus, till Purcell, no musician seems deserving of particular notice. He lived in the

[1] Introduction to the skill of Musick, by John Playford, p. viii.
[2] Burney's Hist. Vol. III. p. 395.
[3] Sonnet 'to Mr. H. Lawes, on his Airs.'

seventeenth century; and to him Burney ascribes the revival of music, till then manifestly on the decline. His genius embraced every species of composition. 'In writing for the Church, whether he adhered to the elaborate and learned style of his predecessors, Tallis, Bird, and Gibbons, in which no instruments were employed but the organ, and in which the several parts were continually moving in fugue; or, giving way to feeling and imagination, adopted the new and more expressive style, of which he was himself one of the principal inventors, accompanying the voice-parts with instruments to enrich the harmony, and enforce the melody and meaning of the words, he manifested equal abilities and resources.' Though shortlived, so great was his superiority, that no other compositions were listened to with pleasure, till they succumbed before the genius of Handel. [1]

Thus pedantry, the last obstacle to the perfection of the art, having yielded to genius, Music reached its highest pitch of refinement; nor since this period have any inventions of importance varied its character. The present system is universally adopted among civilized nations. Music has a language of its own, intelligible to all its admirers, of whatsoever country they may be denizens. In the works of the masters, of the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries, we see the principles now firmly established, expanded by cultivation, and evidencing their soundness by their practical effects. The groundwork of our modern compositions are substantially the same, as that upon which Handel, Graun, Haydn, Mozart, Bach, Beethoven, have reared the monuments of their magnificent genius. But it is our loss that we have

[1] Burney's Hist. Vol. III. p. 479.

neglected to cultivate our advantages. The time has been, when almost the whole genius of the art was devoted to the Church. Now, what sickly talent remains, is cherished for the opera and the ball-room. Few ever dream of laying their offerings upon the altar of their God. And why? Because of the general spirit of listlessness to the great subjects of a Christian's faith. Many are mighty fastidious in their choice of the songs of the day, but who cheers himself with 'the songs of Sion'? Hence the blessing of God rests not upon our labours.[1] None arise to remind us of the giants on earth in former days. The very music of the theatre, though munificently encouraged, is vapid and common-place. The great masters of the lyre are pushed aside, to make room for some novel and ephemeral competitor. The Church offers little encouragement to the young musician, who desires to sanctify his gift, but doles out a pittance insufficient to provide the barest subsistence. Sacred composition accords not with public taste; and the only choice remaining, is the secularisation of the talent, or starvation. So slight is the interest taken in sacred song, that were it not for some remaining respect to custom and antiquity, the very music of the church might dwindle into an occasional performance of a languid anthem, or the lifting up of an ill-regulated psalm-tune. The art, however, is too important to be suffered to merge into obscurity. Its principles are too deeply set in human nature, to be readily eradicated. Its sway, where scope is permitted, is the sway of a magician. Great is the evil of which it is the undesigned instrument—great is the good

[1] 'It seems,' says Burney, in his Continental Tour, Vol. I. p. 127. 'as if the national music of a country was good or bad, in proportion to that of its Church service.'

which results from its proper direction. Let the Church then claim her pre-eminent right to its peculiar employment. Neither taste nor talent will suffer loss. On the contrary, once remove the tumid passages, ' thick laid as varnish on a harlot's cheek,' from the choicest operatic music,—

> ——the rest,
> Thin sown with aught of profit or delight,
> Will far be found unworthy to compare
> With Sion's songs, to all true taste's excelling,
> Where God is praised aright, and godlike men,
> The Holiest of Holies, and His saints.

III.

THE CLERGYMAN.

Let me see wherein
My tongue hath wronged him : if it do him right,
Then he hath wronged himself; if he be free,
Why then my taxing, as a wild goose, flies
Unclaimed of any man.

SHAKSPEARE.

We have already seen, that the church, having provided in her services for the encouragement of music, stands not amenable for its present degraded condition. It remains therefore to investigate the conduct of her members; those especially who are appointed to carry into effect the provisions she has made for the general edification.

The first in honour, as in place, are the clergy ; and it were vain to endeavour to cloak the indifference, with which they generally regard this part of their duty, to superintend, regulate, and inspirit the music of the church. In most places, the choir are left to their own fitful struggles, without any offer of clerical assistance. Occasionally indeed, a native admiration of the art, a vague sense of obligation, a fondness for power, or a spirit of interference, operating severally or collectively, may arouse to exertion. But obstacles arise at every step, the materials are found unmanageable, taste is outraged, dignity is offended,

zeal is soon stumbled, and the attempt to regulate abandoned as hopeless. Hence, after a bold commencement, some clergymen are fain to satisfy themselves with an appearance of power,—keeping the hand upon the rein, though necessitated to yield it to the management of another, or occasionally tightening it to remind of the existence of this power. Thus orders and counter-orders, from individuals ignorant of the art, issued with pompous importance, not unfrequently bewilder the unhappy organist; whose superior knowledge in his particular profession certainly demands some slight deference to his opinion. Where indeed a clergyman perceives evidences of a vain and indevotional spirit, want of skill is no argument against interference; but for a man to intrude his precepts wantonly, lest the choir should forget that he possesses a control over their movements, is as injudicious as ungenerous. By such conduct he sits like an incubus upon the growth of the very art which he professes to cherish. This is not the species of encouragement which church music demands; and yet it is to be feared, that in most parishes, no other kind of attention is even imagined as obligatory on the part of the minister. To this almost general neglect may be mainly attributed the present infirm state of sacred music throughout the kingdom.

Few individuals, especially in the country, possess such influence over the people as the clergyman. They regard his word as their direction, and his conduct as their example. They expect him to be a pattern of every excellence in church, and out of church. And while they reverence firmness and consistency of character: they are ever ready to quote his example as an apology for their own infirmities, follies, or even sins. Too indolent to examine Scripture for

a standard of perfection, they blunder upon the very natural conclusion, that he who preaches christian doctrine must be himself a pattern of christian practice; and thus greedily quaff any cordial that promises to appease the remonstrances of an uneasy conscience.

Did the evil however extend no further, it were well. Such is the present character of the clergy, that the people would be no sufferers, if they made it the basis of their imitation. But the idea is not uncommon, that there is a licence permitted to the laity above the clergy, in a ratio which varies according to the ignorance that blunts, or the sins that vitiate the mind of the reasoner. By such sophistry the people frequently measure their responsibility even in the house of God. The clergyman in the performance of his sacred functions is an object of general observation. If his manner be marked by carelessness, he may be satisfied that his congregation will not be behind him in irreverence. If his character be in general worldly and trifling, many may be able to separate the negligence of the preacher, from the dignity of his office. But if he be a man of warm, judicious piety, of uniform solemnity of demeanour, and yet evince a marked indifference to one solitary portion of the service in which he is not prominently engaged, how will they reason? That the part alluded to is of slight importance, and the neglect of it free from responsibility. May not the clergyman then, in some instances, congratulate himself as one cause of the decline of his psalmody?—The solemn liturgy is concluded. After a moment's silent prayer, all rise from their knees, their minds prepared for the cheering invitation, 'Let us sing to the praise and glory of God.' The psalm is given out. The singers elbow themselves into notice, and the tune advances. Verse follows verse,—but

he appointed to lead the public devotions is no longer in his place in the house of God. At last the vestry door opens, the eyes of the people follow him up the aisle, and are hardly recalled to their duty, till he has ascended the pulpit. Hitherto he has rather disturbed, than countenanced this portion of the service. After a moment's pause, a few lines perhaps remain, during the singing of which, as a last redeeming effort, he may yet encourage by the sound of his voice, or the movement of his lips, the hallowed exercise of praise. No, it is time that he has to spare,—and looking once round upon the congregation, he sits back upon his seat, there reposing till this wearisome duty is performed. Now I would ask a man of common consideration, whether our church, in the recommendations above alluded to, ever imagined such a contempt thrown upon a most important part of her services by her own minister? I would ask, how in the nature of things any importance can be expected to attach to a rite so slighted by one who stands forth as the delegated ambassador of God, to impress upon the minds of the people, by his own solemnity, the awful character of every portion of the sacred duties in which they are engaged? It is the injunction of Scripture: 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might,'[1]—and if this apply even to worldly concerns, how much more to the circumstantials of a spiritual sacrifice, where every duty performed should have the seal of a most holy meaning, where every sound that is uttered should be a vehicle for divine communications, and where every needless ceremony is an insult to the Majesty of Him 'with whom alone we have to do!' If the song of praise be but 'an empty sound and a

[1] Ecclesiastes ix. 10.

tinkling cymbal,' then our church in authorizing its exercise, has abused the confidence of her children; but if it be indeed a means of rich edification, then her ministers are not guiltless, when they presume to treat it with neglect.

A clergyman, who is indifferent to the mode in which music is performed in his church cannot be expected to encourage its private or social practice. He is alike careless, who the singers are—how they are obtained—how replenished—whether they ever rehearse—in what manner. The idea seems to possess him, that Psalmody is but a wedge to keep asunder the divisions of the service; and that the form it assumes is a matter solely of parochial attention; since it is the business of the congregation to provide that they are suitably amused, during the brief space of their pastor's absence. This indeed is a mode of reasoning which no pious and sensible individual would for a moment willingly entertain; and yet, in many cases, it is by some such subtle delusion, that the influence of an occasional sense of personal responsibility is weakened or stupified. But whether he reason so or not, he virtually lays this unfortunate part of the service under an interdict; and not unfrequently crowns his negligence, by leaving entirely to the discretion of others, what Psalm shall be sung, without respect to its general arrangement as a composition, its application to his sermon, or even to connection or common sense. Thus the people, 'the still-discordant wavering multitude,' have little reason to feel themselves under obligation to one who fosters their natural disrespect to the worship of Almighty God.

But the people are not the only sufferers. They indeed are left uninterested, or even shocked by the unpruned extravagances of the choir, but the

choir themselves have to mourn most deeply the backwardness of the clergyman to exert his influence. Composed as they generally are of rebellious materials, the evils arising from the want of a master-spirit to awe them into order, pierce deeper than the mere sensibilities of the hearer. Left, without suitable check, to the evil workings of their own evil passions, they find 'the lordship of themselves an heritage of woe.' In fact, the organ pew and singing gallery are too often the theatre for the display of petty rivalries, bickerings, jealousies, disputes, dissensions, vain emulations, and all those sinful principles, which would overturn heaven itself, and bring down a curse, instead of a blessing, upon the most hallowed employment. Now, who is the individual under God to keep in abeyance these unruly elements, and command their obedience, if not their expulsion, but the clergyman? If he is a man, whose character is an honour to his profession, his bare presence, and a show of interest, are sufficient to ensure the congregation from open scandal. If he cannot eradicate the seeds of evil, he will thus, at any rate, be better able to discern and check their workings, and exercise with more effect the peaceful duties of his ministry. To him, if to any one they would bow; and it is therefore a source of peculiar grief, to observe how generally a most important field of Christian labour is deserted by the Christian husbandman.

To enable a clergyman to become an efficient regulator of his choir, it is of the first importance, that he possess a high sense of duty. If he be so unfortunate as to have a mind not susceptible of the 'touches of sweet harmony,' and an understanding so unimaginative, as to be unable to comprehend, how aught that swells not the intellect can edify the

soul, he may indeed deem the performance merely a general convenience, rank it with the advantages of a roof over his head, and deny that there is on his part any obligation to the superintendence of either. Low as he thus most undeservedly places this sacred art, even his own principles cannot screen him from animadversion. Admitting that the regulation of the choir is the province of the precentor or organist, as the oversight of the building is the duty of the churchwarden, how would such a reasoner act, if when he entered his church upon the Sabbath, he found the cloth of the desk torn and drooping, the door of the pulpit off its hinge, the sound-board threatening him by its sloping direction, or a shingle from the roof admitting the wind to play with the leaves of his manuscript? Would he hesitate to admonish the churchwarden of the state of the church? Would he admit the excuse that the parish was poor, and ill able to support the expence of repair,—that the personal inconvenience was slight, and of small account? Would he not remind him of the sanctity of the place, and the respect due to Him who dwells there, and have ready upon his tongue the apostolic precept, 'Let all things be done decently and in order?' And would he not, if he found his churchwarden contumacious, present his dilapidated church at the next Chancellor's visitation? Undoubtedly, if he had any jealousy for the divine honour, he would assume his character as superior overseer, and not rest, till he had effected a reformation. Why then is there not the same care and oversight for the musical mode of filling up a vacant space in the service,—placing it upon the lowest level, as a mere piece of ecclesiastical convenience? If indeed he find that the Psalmody, instead of an edification, has become an offence to some, a scorn to

others, and a source of discomfort to all but the performers who may naturally be supposed in love with their own progeny, then let him be consistent, assume the character that belongs to him, stretch forth his wand of authority, and introduce such a reform, as may best accord with his own powers and the circumstances of his parish. Allowing, therefore for a moment, that church performances are nothing more than a species of machinery, devised for some secular purpose, as a temporary convenience, and no further influencing the soul, than a sound roof to protect from rain, or a cushion to sit upon; yet because they appertain, however meanly, to the service of the house of God, it is clearly the duty of the clergyman to provide that their character shall, in some respect, harmonize with the nature of their design.

Against this depreciating view of church music, however, we enter our protest, and that the more cordially, as it is too generally adopted. The sentiment of our Scottish king James is, unhappily, no novelty in the present day, when, praising the masterly performance which has given Hooker the name of judicious, he classes the outward edifice of the church and church music on a par.[1]

There can, however, be no higher insult offered to a sacred art, than such an unjust and degrading comparison. The accommodation which a mere building affords, has respect only to the body; and when it at all subserves the cause of religion, can claim but the merit of a negative advantage; affording not a luxurious carnal entertainment, but such appliances that the flesh shall, in no respect, divert by a sense of outward inconvenience, that absorp-

[1] Hooker's Life by Walton.

tion of the spirit in divine things, which should ever attend a spiritual service. Such accommodation cannot add to devotion—it has no means of expanding it—its utmost commendation is, that it acts as a guard against those casualties and nervous impediments, which might deprive the soul of its enjoyment, by its union with an uneasy and troubled tabernacle. For it is especially true in devotional exercises, that

> We are not ourselves,
> When nature, being oppressed, commands the mind
> To suffer with the body.

This is the amount of the services rendered by the conveniences of a church. But who will venture to assert that no more is to be expected of an exercise, which has been the loved employment of the children of God in all ages—by the agency of which, the Holy Spirit has deigned to convey the noblest and most elevated truths—which is allowed, tacitly by some, confessedly by others, and experimentally by all, to be the most powerful engine to arrest and exalt the feelings—on whose wings the breathings of thousands ascend now to the throne of the Holy One—which is declared in Scripture to form the unwearied occupation of Angels and Archangels, Cherubim and Seraphim—and whose character is determinately fixed in the same Revelation, as indestructible in its essence, and eternal in its existence. How can such an art, so hallowed, and so immortalized, be placed on a level with the carnal accommodations for mere outward repose!

We are taught, both by Scripture and experience, that of the many means of grace, all have not the same character, afford not the same nourishment. All indeed subserve the several ends for which they were ordained, but these ends vary greatly in propor-

tion, as well as in importance. Those rank in the first place, which, in things of vital consequence, obey the direct command of God, and lift the soul most entirely from the pleasures of earth to the enjoyments of heaven. Another class comprehend opportunities of an inferior kind, powerful auxiliaries to devotion, where attainable, but not necessary to salvation, and therefore not binding upon every individual. A third class comprise certain requisites, not in themselves direct means of grace, but whose absence is painfully perceived. In the first class, we number prayer, praise; public ordinances of worship, the sacraments. In the second, external incitements to devotion, especially music, and its kindred arts, painting, poetry, sculpture, and architecture ; for who has not felt a momentary religious awe when contemplating some mighty monument of human genius, dedicated to the honour of Him, who ' dwelleth not in temples made with hands ? " To the third class, refer propriety of place and circumstance, such as, decency of apparel in waiting upon God, suitable accommodation in His house, and correctness in the outward forms of divine service ; for although there is no more grace to be imbibed from beholding a clean wall, or sitting in a sound seat, than in wearing a coat free from holes ; yet there is a degree of impropriety in petty offences against decency which is apt in some cases to disturb devotion, and impede the operation of the higher means of grace. But who would presume to rank on a par, the dignity, utility, and beauty of these three classes of devotional auxiliaries ? Who annihilate all distinction between what is accidental, and what essential ? Who assert that there is no greater responsibility attached to the violation of a direct command, than to the neglect of a privilege—no greater to the neglect of a privilege, than to the contempt of per-

sonal convenience? Surely it is sufficiently manifest, that the cultivation of an art, to which grace has in thousands of instances proved itself an actual concomitant, is of far higher importance, than mere temporary arrangements made to lull the outward senses into a state of present quiescence!

Whether then ecclesiastical music be considered in the first rank, as the fulfilment of a divine command, or in the second, as a rich, but not essential auxiliary to devotion, it is evident, that it claims from the ministers of God the most active endeavours to uphold that which is good, and reform that which is evil, in the course of its hallowed performance.

But how can a man attempt a reformation of his church music, when he possesses not the merest acquaintance with the art? This seems a knotty question. It is certainly desirable, that every clergyman should have some knowledge of music, not merely theoretical, but practical. 'A little learning is a dangerous thing,' is an apothegm which, if it holds good with professional musicians, applies not to such as are rather ambitious to devote their talents to the use, than to the ornament of a sacred service. The difficulty may indeed appear almost insuperable, where a clergyman, with but slender information, has to contend with a conceited organist or precentor, who has acquired knowledge without reverence, execution without judgment. In such a case, the man might be inclined to sneer at the advice offered, and conceive that he was best able to judge of the beauty of his musical grimaces, and his means of promoting the pleasure and profit of the congregation. Hence he might not only resent the interference, but plume himself upon arguments calculated, as he thinks, to bear down the slight knowledge of his reprover; and by a crafty handling of technical terms, actually

overawe for a time the sound convictions of plain good sense, and a taste that was substantially correct. For we are ever disposed to give credit for superior wisdom to those who can heap together hard names of a science, with which we are partially or totally unacquainted. In order, however, to encourage clergymen not to shrink from their duty, even under such circumstances, when they perceive the choir attempting to transform the church into a house of entertainment, I may state it as a fact, that one of the most talented organists and composers of the present day, though an amateur,[1] has recorded with thankfulness to God, that he received his first notions of the true style of ecclesiastical music from an aged Bishop, who, though unskilled in the art, *felt*,—for with him it was a matter of feeling,—that the solemnity of the service was destroyed by mere skill, devoid of taste and reverence. The passage alluded to is in a letter from which I have his permission to transcribe. He is representing a conversation which, as a young man studying in Germany, he had with an excellent Moravian Bishop who had sent to request that he would act as organist upon occasion of the administration of the Lord's Supper. There was no lack of skill or execution in the eight organists who gratuitously rendered that service to the church. "But," says he, "our taste at that time was bad. The noble simplicity of our church music and hymn tunes was lost in flourishings and all manner of ill-placed decorations, and long straggling interludes. Little attention was paid to that agreement between music and words, by which they are made to speak the same language, and to convey, each in their degree, the

[1] The Rev. C. I. Latrobe, whose services to the cause of Sacred Music are too generally acknowledged, to require his son to risk a charge of partiality by a fuller eulogium.

same feeling to the mind. Frequent complaints were made by the worthy and venerable fathers of our Church, who felt themselves disturbed by the thoughtless and tasteless manner of playing the organ. But they were not heeded, and rather considered as a proof, that the complainants wanted skill to appreciate the value of our artful and ornamental musical drapery, with which we clothed tunes, otherwise, in our opinion, too dull and monotonous. No one felt more keenly and more justly the absurdity and real mischief of our manner than that excellent man, the late Bishop Spangenberg. After much gentle and fruitless remonstrance, he at length hit upon an expedient, which at least in a degree answered his purpose, and for which I feel grateful at this moment." Taking advantage of an opportunity before a sacrament, he sent for the writer, and addressed him thus :—" I have for this long time past felt my mind burdened with concern and even pain when I considered, how the most beautiful part of our worship is rendered unpleasant to me and others, by the manner of my brethren in playing the organ. They seem not to have duly considered the importance of that species of service, especially in a living church of God. I will not charge you or them with levity or indifference, for I consider the fault to originate more in thoughtlessness, than in a total disregard to the subjects of the hymn or the feelings of the congregation ; but it has become such a burden to me, that I cannot help feeling rather indignant, especially as some conversation I have already had with one of your number, has produced no impression or effect whatever. I have this day been desired to officiate at the holy communion, but had almost declined it, for fear that the common way of playing the organ might again so much disturb my mind, that I should become unfit for so solemn a

service, and interrupted in my enjoyment by a distracted attention.

" ' All at once the thought struck me, I will send for my dear friend L. and speak with him about it. Perhaps he will not despise the remarks of an old man, who indeed understands nothing at all of music, and cannot point out the nature of the grievance, but yet thinks, that he has a just sense of what is proper and consistent in performing a service in the house of God, which may either contribute to edification, or create great disturbance in the congregation. Perhaps he will feel disposed, if not from a conviction of his mind, yet out of regard to an old friend of his grandfather, father, and of himself, to humour him for once, and play in such a manner as will please him.—Now do you think, that you can bring yourself to omit for my sake, what you may consider very fine, and condescend to play a simple tune, unadorned with so many additional notes and flourishes; and, though you should even not like it yourself, submit for friendship's sake to humour my weakness?' I heard this affectionate address with an impression which convinced me of the truth of his remarks. I promised to observe his directions; and as I was leaving the room, he added: ' Well, my dear friend, if after you have accorded to my wishes this once, you yourself disapprove of it, and think that I have erred in thus endeavouring to make a revolution in the manner of playing the organ, I will say no more; but shall be thankful for your complying with my wishes on this occasion.'

" I was happy to hear, after the communion, that my highly-revered adviser fully approved of the simple and artless manner I had adopted, in accompanying the beautiful hymns he had chosen for that solemnity.

" Little did the venerable Bishop suppose that, on

that occasion, he was reading a lecture upon Church Music, which would produce more real and substantial benefit to his audience than most of the learned and elaborate dissertations on Counterpoint have ever done. He did indeed bring about a reformation, the good effects of which were enjoyed for many years. As for me, I was so fully convinced, by the experiment itself, of the superior effect of true simplicity in accompanying tunes, and suffering the beautiful combinations and transitions with which many of them abound, to present themselves in their native grandeur, divested of the harlequin dress by which many organists are apt to cover and disgrace them, that from that very day I changed my whole style of playing.

"But the most essential benefit I derived from this circumstance was, that it caused me to consider the services of an organist in the Church of God in a different light, and taught me to pray that, as far as I was engaged in it, I might serve Him acceptably, and not disturb, but rather further, the devotions of the congregation."

An instance is thus adduced, in which a very slight acquaintance with Music, united however with correct feeling and fervent piety, was rendered in the highest degree serviceable to one of considerable knowledge and exercise in the art. And if, where circumstances are so unequal, a clergyman may yet hope for the advantage, what influence might he not possess over common parochial performers! Ignorant in many cases of the barest rudiments of music—singing and playing by the ear, as it is termed—untutored in time or in tune—not reading a note, or but imperfectly—confined in their skill to the narrow bounds of a few tasteless tunes, any person with the slightest exertion may assume to himself the office of their

instructor. If he would endeavour to acquaint himself with the elements of the art, and accompany his progress by an occasional half-hour's practice on the flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello or piano-forte, as may consist with his opportunities, he will soon find himself able, not only to comprehend the value of the look of superior wisdom assumed by the precentor, and imitated by his ignorant associates, but also to encounter boldly the conceited stare of the more talented organist. A comparatively slight preparation will enable him to proceed upon his work of gradual reform. In fact, generally speaking, the competition will be most unequal. The rustic performers have little time to exercise, less to read, and no opportunity for imbibing just principles by mental cultivation. The difference between them and their clergymen, is the difference between common soldiers and their general. They have the hand, and he has the head. Their exertions are almost mechanical,—it is his province to regulate them, and so to dispose their force, as to render them effectual by a grave, well-timed, and harmonious combination. Hence, in the contest that is likely to ensue between a country choir to be reformed, and the reforming minister, the advantages of his education no less than his present leisure, will enable him to bring the slight knowledge he possesses, to bear on the most favourable point; till by a powerful attack where he feels the strength of his position, and the spirit of his arguments, and a cautious retreat, where he finds himself upon uncertain footing, he will finally come off victor. But how is this to be effected?

Suppose a clergyman inducted to a country living, of which he comes to take possession. The small church is crowded to hear the 'new parson,' and the

singers and performers are preparing in the gallery to make their best display. At the appointed time they commence. The first specimen he has of his choir is perhaps ushered in by a clarinet, which, though rather a favourite in country churches, is the most hapless in untutored hands. This is commissioned to lead off, and after some dreadful hiccups on the part of the instrument, which is its infirmity when clumsily dealt with, and which chases the blood chill through the veins, the tune is completed, and the singing proceeds. Then other instruments are introduced—

> the flute,
> And the vile squeaking of the wry-necked fife,

and it may be, breaking suddenly in with portentous thunder, after three or four notes spent in gathering up the long clambering instrument, some unlucky, deep-mouthed bassoon. It may readily be conceived, that these instruments by their united clamour, will lay a sufficient foundation of noise, upon which the singers may rear their superstructure. This they proceed to do with their whole breadth of lungs, each striving to surpass his neighbour in vociferation; till, exhausted with the exercise, they gradually cease, according to the tenure of their breath; the bassoon player, for the dignity of his instrument, commencing his last note rather later than the rest, and, by a peculiar motion of his shoulders, pumping out the whole power of his lungs in one prolonged and astounding roar. All sit down—a smile of self-gratulation playing about the lip, supposing that they have given their new parson a good idea of the manner in which they can anticipate the joys of heaven, as if

> 'The air of Paradise did fan the house,
> And angels officed all.'

The thoughts however that his mind, would be

little calculated to foster their complacency. Feeling the necessity of some attempt at reformation, he waits at the foot of the gallery, as they come lumbering down with their instruments. Now is the critical time. How shall he succeed? They pass him, 'make a leg, and fling their head before.' Perhaps as he sees them so happy with their own performance, he has not courage enough to break the spell of their felicity, and obtrude upon them 'the icy precepts of respect.' He determines to try another sabbath. At last his patience is exhausted—he must interfere. Now for the exercise of courage, judgment, and forbearance; for I verily believe, that had the taming and bringing into order a country choir, been appointed for one of the labours of Hercules, he would have lost his reward. He who undertakes such a task, stands in need of every christian virtue, for it is no powerless ordeal to which he will be exposed. He is about to withstand principles, which for obstinate depravity have no rival in the human heart—the principles of ignorant selfishness, and petty pride.

The term 'irritabile genus' has long been applied to poets; and musicians may claim the same appellation, from the gigantic Handel to the humblest among his followers. There is no sore in the human mind, that so morbidly shrinks from the touch, as assumed skill in music or poetry. The sons of fancy, or those that fancy themselves so, possess a fund of pride, which seems to have been set apart for the nourishment of all imaginative pursuits. Now this species of pride, like many others, thrives best upon a hot bed of ignorance. If a man once learns enough of any subject, to persuade himself that he knows something about it, then let him alone for 'nursing his pride to keep it warm.'

If this then be the case with men of cultivated minds, who are supposed to employ some degree of philosophy and self-respect to veil their weaknesses, with what rudeness does conceit work in the breasts of the lower class of the people! Their thoughts are ever on their tongues, and in their countenances. Compared with their better-bred neighbours, there is an honesty even in their very follies. They never attempt to cloak their feelings by the arts of polished society. I envy not then the situation of that clergyman, who has to bring against the frost-work of this self-applause, the battering ram of honest conviction. He may indeed speedily effect his main object; but, unless he proceed with great caution, he will embroil himself in tumults and dislikes, that may interfere with his most important labours, and almost necessitate him to seek for some sphere of exertion, where similar prejudices do not obtain. To avoid such a result, it is of great consequence that he introduce his innovations gradually, fully ascertain the temper of the people, treat them in his whole conduct with kindness and respect, let them feel, and find out of their own accord, his superiority, rather than have it forced upon them; and then, with these preliminary measures, he may summon as much fortitude and firmness as the case requires, to enable him to pursue his design to complete success.

When he has made himself fully acquainted with the nature and extent of the evil, let him mingle with them in conversation,—speak to them of the importance of their office,—tell them of nobler principles than their own pride,—inquire after their tunes,—evince, by a few pertinent remarks, that he has some knowledge of the art,—and shew that he is willing to interest himself in their employments. Let him propose an hour a week at his own house, or at the school-room

for practice. Let him be regular himself in attendance,—solemnize the occasion by a short prayer,—admit them with all their incongruity of instruments, vociferous voices, and bad tunes,—win by kindness their confidence, and then proceed with his work of reformation.

The tunes might claim an immediate attention. In the place of the boisterous anthems and fugues, (as they are impudently termed,) which so generally obtain in country churches, he would seek to substitute simpler and more sober compositions. He would take upon him, as a matter of course, to determine the tunes for the public services and rehearsals, designedly but not professedly, leaving to their deserved fate the most villainous of such as had been previously in use, and adhering to the genuine church tune, specimens of which are still extant in the very worst orchestras.[1] He might then, feeling his way with caution, introduce such melodies as, formed upon the rich combinations, and stern dignity of the chorale, yet attract by the fluency of their measure, and readily approve themselves to the popular taste.

Thus, by degrees, one grand evil would be rectified without exciting needless jealousy. Then the instruments, badly-sorted and worse played, might attract his notice. The bassoon must be dispensed with at all hazard; and if a violoncello can be introduced into its place, an important object is effected. The fife may be easily put down, and even though the clarinet should be suffered to remain with the flute, the evils arising from bad performance will be less perceived, when the tune is restored to its proper character. If, however, considering the usual coarseness of country performances, the clergyman can reduce his

[1] Such as the Old Hundredth, Bedford, Irish, St. Matthew's, St. James', Hanover, St. Ann's, Howard, St. David's, and others.

instruments to a single violoncello, he will possess every requisite support for plain psalmody.

When he is able to devote an hour to his singers, he will find ample employment. The evils that require a reforming hand are chiefly these,—singing out of tune, frequently too flat, with a nasal twang,—straining the voice to an unnatural pitch, as though it were a contest of physical strength,—introducing awkward drawls, and tasteless ornaments. To remedy these defects, time, care, patience, and perseverance would be required,—but the reward would be ample.

Supposing that his utmost care has failed to win the confidence of his choir; if the flute, fife, clarinet, and bassoon, are huffed, and combine with the vocalists to revenge his interference, by withdrawing their assistance—how shall he act? The way is open; let him turn to his Sunday School. There are rich materials for forming a choir. There he will have fewer tempers to contend with. There he will discover a mine of vocal beauty; for no finer voices exist, whether for leading or swelling a chorus, than those of children. So that, in many instances, though the petty vexation for the time would be unpleasant, a more favourable event could hardly happen to a country clergyman, than to be deserted by his singers, and thrown upon the resources of his Sunday School.

Here, however, unless he sing himself, he will find it necessary to procure a precentor. He might then, at certain fixed times, assemble the children for practice. As with them, of course, it will be purely imitation, he would act wisely to exercise their youthful powers upon a plain and homely psalm tune, marking carefully in his own mind, the separate success or failure of each. Some voices might immediately arrest his attention as naturally sweet and melodious, which

perhaps, on further acquaintance, he finds untrue to the note ; others not so rich in tone, but denoting a more correct ear ; others again of a very mediocre stamp, but not absolutely offensive ; and a few, whose natural harshness, and determined inaccuracy, present sufficient evidence of no kind of musical perception. If he is wise, however, he will studiously avoid by a single word, discouraging any child. While he practises by themselves, those who give promise of improvement, he will leave the more uncouth voices to join in, as loudly and heartily as they please, as soon as the tune is sufficiently known to ensure accuracy, evenness and stability.

Yet, whatever tacit check, a clergyman may deem proper to impose upon bad voices and bad ears in his rehearsals, he should beware how he forbids any child or person to employ their voices in the great congregation. Instances have occurred in which a whole school of children have been most audaciously silenced, from a mistaken notion that they interrupted the general harmony. Now I hesitate not to say, that such a prohibition is alike injurious to man, and hateful to God. Praise is declared to be especially ' perfected out of the mouths of babes and sucklings ;' and on one memorable occasion, when clergymen sought to forbid the acclamations of children, the great ' Bishop of our souls' declared his acceptance of them, and that ' if they held their peace, the very stones would immediately cry out.'[1] How offensive then to Him must be that exertion of power, which in the face of his approbation commands silence, when he has commanded praise. If it be argued that in such cases, the voices of the children have been so harsh and mistimed, as to disturb the rest of the

[1] Matthew xxi. 15, 16. Luke xix. 39, 40.

congregation; and that the feelings of the majority should be consulted before the inclinations of a few;—the answer is obvious. Supposing the fact admitted, is it so difficult to subject youthful voices, that the only remedy is absolute prohibition? Are the habits more confirmed in childhood, than in age? Is the will less tractable, the feeling more hardened, the voice less manageable? The acknowledged suppleness of all the bodily and mental faculties in youth sufficiently rebuke the indolence of those who would assume to themselves the responsible power to overawe the operations of the Holy Spirit in the minds of children, and close a floodgate against that tide of youthful feeling, which if not suffered to flow in the channel of holiness, will smoothly enough mingle with the waves of sin.

If however the children, with every care and attention, are intractable and offensive, still praise is a sacred duty; no man has a right to enjoin silence;—and if it only induces the servant of God to urge with greater force upon the people their own obligations, the evil will be not merely counteracted, but converted into a substantial good. The invitation of the Psalmist is unlimited; 'Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord.'[1] Infirmity exempts none from the duty. Nay, all created nature, animate or inanimate, from the lofty angels who surround the throne, to doting old age and helpless infancy—from the heaven of heavens with all their hosts, to the crowded range of this visible world, with its dragons and deeps, fire and hail, snow and vapours, have the glorious privilege. 'Let them praise the name of the Lord, for His name only is excellent, and His glory above heaven and earth.'[2] Shall the tongues of babes be silent,

[1] Psalm cl. 6. [2] Psalm cxlviii. 13.

when even the voiceless portions of time present a grateful harmony to God; 'when day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge?'[1]

A clergyman who feels the importance of his duty, will desire to make the psalmody, as much as possible, congregational. He will not be satisfied to possess a choir, however complete, only for the sake of exhibition. He can have no idea of any part of divine worship becoming a mere musical indulgence, but will consider that, as the duty of gratitude is universal, so also ought to be its expression. Hence he will perceive that the chief requisite in a choir is a sufficient steadiness and volume of sound, to direct the voices of the multitude, preserve them from wandering or sinking, and mellow the necessary harshness of an indiscriminate chorus. A violoncello, a precentor with a clear and true voice, and a chosen band of children, instructed to sing naturally without screaming,—which is their general vice, if not kept in check,—would form the best choir in any church, where the superior advantages of an organ and judicious organist are not readily attained. The skill of the precentor would guide the children—their voices would give fulness and energy to his—the violoncello would ensure stability, and preclude the danger of yielding, to which even the best voice is liable, if unsupported by instruments;—and together, they would form an excellent stop-diapason, upon which every member of the congregation might raise his Hallelujahs, without dread of disturbing devotion by offending taste.

Such a choir might suffice for the common parochial psalmody of any church. If, however, a clergyman

[1] Psalm xix. 2.

would encourage among his people a taste for music, and excite the young men and women of his parish to exercise their several gifts, his opportunities for enriching the beautiful services of the Church would be greatly extended. To some he might recommend instruments suited to their talents and the solemnity of the occasion ; others he might instruct to sing in parts, and thus give a body and effect to tunes of harmonious combinations, which no mere air can possibly produce. By this means he would be enabled to increase his little choir, and render its services peculiarly interesting to the people.

The more extended, however, his choral arrangements, the greater obligation would rest upon him, to keep continually in view the grand design of the duty. He should never permit unnecessary engagements to interfere with his seasons for practice. He should accustom every member of his choir to look to him for direction, frequently admonish them of the privilege and importance of the service, reprove with kindness every symptom of levity and improper conduct, and cut off without hesitation from the little band any man who persists in open sin, whatever may be the character of his musical skill and endowments. In short, he should prove himself the support and stay of the whole orchestra. If he thus enter upon the duty with solemnity, associate it on all occasions, not merely with the form but with the spirit of religion, and check, by every means in his power, the natural fondness of the heart for self-applause, he will find, by the blessing of God, rich fruit attend his labours. His times for musical practice will act as a lever to heave up the moral turpitude under which the better feelings of youth are too often buried. 'Hallowing such seasons by the word of God and by prayer,' he will acknowledge such opportunities

powerful aids to his Sabbath ministrations; and, by a little 'perseverance in well-doing,' may soon have reason to confess, with tears of joy, that while he was rearing a little choir from among his people for the public worship, he was in effect fulfilling the vows of his priesthood, 'to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his children, who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever.'[1]

The advantages accruing to the cause of genuine religion, by such efforts of the clergy to renovate the music of the Church are incalculable. The youth who had been accustomed to spend his leisure time in evil society, or as evil idleness, might now possess a mode of employment, the delight of which would be proportioned to its cultivation, 'grow with its growth, and strengthen with its strength.' Nor would it be merely an animal delight. Music and sentiment are so closely connected, that the practice of the tune would tend to rivet in the mind the divine truth it accompanies, in all its preciousness and importance, and thus prove a direct means of spiritual profit. The public worship of God, the return of the season of rest, the great festivals and solemn days of the Church, and other sacred opportunities, which before were profanely violated, spurned with contempt, or waited upon with listlessness, would thus present inducements and endearments unknown before. The permission to share in the ministrations of the sanctuary might of itself interest the youthful performer, and lead him to enter into the feelings of the Psalmist: 'How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! One day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I

[1] Ordination Service.

had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than dwell in the tents of ungodliness.'[1] In fact, there is nothing so well calculated to engage the affections of the people as an association with the clergy in some portion of the service. Aware of this, the dissenters have almost carried it to the extreme of confounding the offices of the priesthood, and the duties of the laity, thus flattering those who have no very just notions of place and subjection; a practice, which, if it aid not real godliness, tends at least to augment numbers and popularity. The Church of England, on the other hand, has drawn a broad line of distinction between her clergy and laity. She has no notion of divesting offices of responsibility, and making the peculiar duties of the priesthood a matter of general experiment, and the Church a sort of riding-school for religious adventurers. She sees nothing in the arrangement, physical or moral, of God's government under the new dispensation, to induce her to believe that he has confounded that beautiful order, which characterized all his proceedings with the children of Israel. There is variation indeed, but no confusion—liberty, but no license. While, however, she thus preserves distinct the several orders in her pale, she has, in no respect, excluded the laity from uniting with the clergy in the public ministrations. She has assigned to them particular duties, subsidiary and not injurious to the functions of the priesthood, and their own personal edification. For this purpose she has thrown into her services numerous responses, not only as a relief to the general course of the prayers, but as opportunities for the elevated soul to pour forth its feelings in audible whispers of supplication. If in this particular

[1] Psalm lxxxiv. 1—10.

the wisdom of our Church be unobserved, it is because the duty is so little attended to. Good responding and good singing go hand in hand. Those who participate in neither, are no proper judges of the blessing to be derived from the 'communion of saints' in public worship.[1] They lose golden opportunities for arousing the spirit, and enabling it to sustain a lively and elevated tone.

The psalmody is another legitimate opportunity afforded in the Church, for laymen to take a prominent part in the service, and the clergyman, by devoting his attention to its cultivation, will find a manifest improvement in responding. It will be no longer a burden to his people to open their lips. Practised to sing, they will find no difficulty to speak in the house of God; and thus our congregations will cease to present conduct 'inconsistent with the very idea of social worship, (one great benefit of which is to kindle a common feeling, and to animate a torpid spirit) to remain silent themselves, when it belongs to them to utter with their lips the beautiful language of a Liturgy, the purest perhaps and the most complete, that was ever in use with any community of Christians.'[2]

The proper and lively exercise of Church music is further advantageous, as a bait to allure persons into the house of God. Those who despise such means as fictitious, have no common feeling with Herbert, who says:

> A verse may find him who a sermon flies,
> And turn delight into a sacrifice.[3]

[1] The primitive Christians set us an example, by the heartiness of their response:

'Et resonaturis ferit æthera vocibus Amen.'

SHEPHERD, COMMON PRAYER, Vol. I. p. 40.

[2] Sermon by the present Bishop of Llandaff.

[3] The Church Porch. Perirhanterium.

This interest in the psalmody may beget an interest in the other parts of divine worship. By frequent repetition, the verses of the psalm, and the words of the response, which are richly gemmed with scriptural expressions, become impressed upon the mind. A wanderer is thus brought peculiarly within the range of divine grace; and although the bare service cannot avail to salvation, yet He, who works by means, may cause the word uttered by the lip to sow its seed into the heart, and bring forth fruit in its appointed time, 'an hundred fold,' to his honour and glory.

An author,[1] who wrote upwards of a century ago, with great zeal against the 'abuse of music,' adds his testimony to the benefits derived from its proper application. 'By this means, a profane offender is convinced of all, and is judged of all, and quickly either ashamed of his company, or ashamed of his vices. By this means the parishioners are more easily formed into religious societies[2] for the edification of each other. By this means, they who never performed any duty on the Lord's day except the publick, have brought into their families the private exercises of devotion; and they who formerly worshipped God at home, have added this duty of singing his praises, which was before omitted. And by this means, such who before spent the Lord's day idly, or in towns and alehouses, have piously joined together in the church, after evening service, and spent a considerable part of the day in so heavenly an exercise.'[3]

After stating the probable advantages that would

[1] Rev. Arthur Bedford, M.A. Vicar of Temple, Bristol.

[2] The members of such societies, formed for the encouragement of psalmody, voluntarily bound themselves to abstain from swearing, drunkenness, and similar vices, upon pain of a fine imposed for each offence.

[3] Abuse of Musick, p. 231.

follow a renovation of Church Music in our parishes, it is natural to expect some instances of benefits that have resulted from the labours of clergymen in this cause. Without referring to more modern experiments, we find a paragraph to the point, in the volume from which the above extract is taken. The worthy vicar of Temple is quoting "the words of an ingenious author, in an excellent tract lately printed on the subject. 'If you ask what wonders this charmer hath wrought in our age and country, we have instances that (under so general a corruption of manners, and deluge of profaneness) may pass, if not for miracles, yet at least subservient to the great design of miracles, viz. the advancement of piety, when she had any footing left; and revival of religion, when she seemed to have expired. But this must be understood, where psalmody herself has been revived and improved in some degree.'[1]

"A worthy divine (Dr. Bray) who, amongst his other pious endeavours, has expressed no small zeal and skill in recommending and promoting this religious exercise, has assured us: 'That through the fondness of the people for psalm-singing, many have recovered their reading, which they had almost forgot, and many have learned to read for the sake of singing psalms, where it has been practised to some advantage in the performance. 'Tis likewise certain, that in his own country parish, the young men that used to loiter in the churchyard, or saunter about the neighbouring grounds, and not come into church till the divine service was over, upon his ordering a psalm to be sung before prayers began, they came flocking into the church, where, by this means, he had 'em present both at the prayers and preaching.'

[1] Essay for the promoting of Psalmody, p. 6.

"To this we may add the testimony of a worthy minister, written to the Rev. Dr. Woodward.

"'When I first came to my parish, I found to my great grief, the people very ignorant and irreligious; the place of divine worship indecently kept; the public service neither understood nor attended; the ministration of the Lord's Supper supported only by the piety of three or four communicants; and the divine ordinance of singing psalms almost laid aside. Now whilst I considered by what means I might redress this general neglect of religion, I was of opinion, that the setting up of such a religious society as I had known in the city of London, would be very proper; but I feared it would be impracticable in the country: so that, at first, I began to teach three or four youths the skill of singing psalms orderly, and according to rules, which greatly tended, through the grace of God, to awaken their affections towards religion, and to give them a relish for it. The improvement of these in psalm-singing being soon observed by others, many young men desired to be admitted to the same instruction; which, being granted, and the number of them increasing daily, they readily submitted to the rules of a religious society, and have ever since been careful observers of them. By whose means a general revival of piety, and a solemn observance of the public ordinances of God hath been produced among us. So that a great number of poor children are now kept at school, by their charity, who are carefully catechized, and many pious books given to children and others. And, to the joy of all pious souls, our shepherds, ploughmen, and other labourers, at their work, perfume the air with the melodious singing of psalms.'

"'Twas by the same pious artifice that the divine

Herbert raised his honest farmers to those elevated degrees of piety, for which the memory both of himself and his parishioners, will be for ever sweet. It is commonly known, that at the ringing of a bell, they would leave their ploughs, and come to church. Perhaps this other truth is not so well known : ' That those who could not come without extraordinary inconvenience, would take the same signal of the bell, to sing in the field a psalm or hymn to their Creator and Redeemer.'

" The same proofs of its efficacy are still found, where it is frequently and decently practised, according to the just remark of the forecited Doctor : ' That every one may observe, that in churches where psalms are best and oftenest sung, those churches are always best filled." [1]

To these quotations from the above essay, Mr. Bedford adds part of a letter, " which he formerly received from an ingenious and religious clergyman on this subject," pointing out the reasons which induced him to encourage ' divine music ' as much as possible. If there are any inclined to smile at the last, as not being of sufficient dignity and disinterestedness, it must be at any rate admitted, that ' cheerfulness ' in paying or giving, is of itself a sufficient reward for the cultivation of the principle that produces it. These are his reasons.

" ' I. It is a means to bring all young persons to church, who are either engaged in it themselves, or delight to hear it, whereby they have an opportunity of hearing sermons, which many times have a good effect upon their lives. This I have found by my own experience, having seldom a congregation of less than sixty, when my predecessor seldom had more than six.

[1] Abuse of Musick, pp. 231—233.

'II. It gives me an opportunity of taking better notice of the lives and manners of the young people, by being more frequently conversant with them (which in country places is a difficult matter, they being for the most part so far distant, and continually engaged in the business of their callings) whereby I have procured a more considerable reformation of manners in this place, than perhaps is decent for me to tell.

'III. It gives me an opportunity by singing psalms, &c. to possess them with awful and reverential thoughts of not only this, but other duties; and this I have done with good success, which if you are ever pleased to change with me on a Sunday, yourself will observe; the society of singers being in all respects the most regular part of the congregation.

'IV. It is a means to promote love and friendship, which it hath so effectually done in this parish, that since there hath been a society of singers, there hath scarce been any difference known among us.

'V. It doth not a little contribute to the preventing of schism, and fixing them in the Established Church.

'VI. I may add one advantage to myself, viz. the cheerful payment of their tythes, upon which account I have had no trouble, to the great wonder of my neighbours.'"[1]

But who can number the blessings which wait upon the exertions of a clergyman to promote a musical taste among his people? If the affections are indeed the most susceptible in youth, how important is it to place them early under the spell of so powerful a magician as Religious Harmony! And who can tell but in after life, when the young man's foot is far from the place of his birth, and his

[1] Abuse of Musick, pp. 233, 234.

companions are tempting him to sin, some youthful musical association may recal him to a sense of his duty, win his spirit back to his native hills, and from thence as a penitent to his God! It is because we have been so long unmindful of the amazing influence of this spiritual engine, and have satisfied ourselves with a puritanical prosing about the danger of abuse, that we have lost many a fair field in our contest with spiritual enemies. While we have been heaving upon our shoulders a shield of weighty arguments, crowning our heads with a brazen helmet of human distinctions, and wielding a mighty spear of thundering denunciations, Satan has assumed our most powerful weapon, and, with the pebble of tender affections, carried off his victim, whom we had trusted to win 'with our sword, our spear, and our shield.' There are many inclined to depreciate the value of the affections as applied to religion, and conceive that argument, the continued storm of the intellect, is the only efficacious way to carry the citadel, and urge a sinner to cry for mercy. But facts are stubbornly opposed to such seemingly correct notions. What God demands is not merely the conviction of the head, but the affection of the heart. And though it is true that the latter, if genuine, can never exist without the former, it is equally true that the head is frequently taken captive when the heart is untouched. Conviction is not conversion—but conversion is ever attended with conviction. The fact is, that the effort of the intellect absolutely necessary to salvation, is incalculably slight. Else how is it, that so many in this country, who are half idiots—and among the heathen, who are half brutes in understanding, are made vessels for the indwelling of the Spirit? God himself has told us, that the path of truth is so plain, that 'way-faring men though

fools, shall not err therein.'[1] Once win the affections, and if it be the work of the Spirit, the understanding is also won. 'And let us remember,' as a pleasing writer of the day observes, 'what is the alternative, if we abandon the attempt to call in the imagination and feelings to assist the influence of religion. The question is not whether mankind ought to be influenced by feeling and imagination, but whether these are to be enlisted on the side of religion or against it. Imagination, feelings, and associations, youth will have, and it is for us to determine only whether these should be connected with the Christian faith, or left to be opposed to it.'[2] If the aid from them be trivial, still, surrounded as we are by foes, it were folly to reject it: if it prove energetic and effectual, then what greater madness, than to leave it for the advantage of the enemy? Truly, Satan has gained enough by the supineness of our ancestors,—be it our's to wrestle with him for the remainder, to wall up this breach which has been so long left open in our spiritual Sion, to assign Music its proper rank among the sacred gifts of God, and thus give the full strength of its energies to battle in the field of the Christian warfare.

[1] Isaiah xxxv. 8.
[2] Broad Stone of Honour, pp. lxii, lxiii.

IV.

THE CHOIR.

Here every drop of honey hides a sting ;
Worms wind themselves into our sweetest flowers :
And ev'n the joy, that haply some poor heart
Derives from heav'n, pure as the fountain is,
Is sullied in the stream ; taking a taint
From touch of human lips, at best impure.
O for a world in principle as chaste
As this is gross and selfish ! over which
Custom and prejudice shall bear no sway ;
Where he that bears an office shall esteem
The occasion it presents of doing good
More than the perquisite.

COWPER.

In those glorious days, when God was pleased to assume to himself the regulation of the minutest part of his worship, and to appoint fifty thousand servants of various ranks and degrees to wait upon him in his temple, it is expressly said, 'in their set office, they sanctified themselves in holiness.'[1] If we compare this simple but powerful description, with the character of those who constitute servants of the House of God among us, how broad and unpleasing does the contrast appear! How are we distanced both in practice and pretension!

I speak not of the clergy, who, by the vows of their

[1] 2 Chron. xxxi. 18.

ordination, and the peculiar nature of their duties, cannot disgrace their profession without the sacrifice of every honourable feeling, but of those who hold inferior offices in the church,—of those, to whom is committed the preservation of external decorum—of him, who is the voice of the people in petition,—and of them, who are their voice in thanksgiving.

Reason and revelation equally concur to stamp the introduction of openly ungodly men into the service of the sanctuary, as a most daring insult to Him, who is least deserving of such conduct, and most powerful to punish it. The conviction of responsibility respecting the appointment of unworthy ministers is spreading daily among those, in whose hands this sacred trust is reposed. The pulpit resounds, and the press teems, with most just representations of this responsibility. Why then is not a word said to warn flagitious characters against presuming to undertake the lower departments of the Temple service? Why not a line written to urge caution in their appointment? Is there so broad a distinction between the two sets of duties, that they cannot be measured by the same principles? Is the minister alone privileged to have a soul? Are the church officers mere automata—the singers, musical pipes of self-operating machinery? Without such an idea, it is impossible to account for negligence so prolonged and determined. To imagine that there generally exists a becoming sense of the sacred character of all ecclesiastical employments, and that, at the same time, the eye is wilfully closed to the moral unfitness of those who undertake them, is to suppose a state of things of all others to be deprecated, where the divine jealousy is wantonly trampled upon, to make way for some object of mere human expediency.

High time is it to touch this sore, for it is rising before the face of the Eternal, and, if not probed, may encrust the whole body spiritual with a dark and loathsome leprosy, and bring down a judgment that will not tarry. Where do we hear, amid the loud clamour that is daily raised respecting grievances, any voice uplifted to pray for some little caution in the choice of church officers, who, as far as regards their spiritual qualifications, seem to be left to almost authorized neglect? Where, throughout the whole breadth of the land, is the attention called to this subject, in the smallest degree proportioned to its actual importance?

Immoral and infidel men are curses in any parish, whether as private individuals, or in official situations. They are like so many moving masses of pestilential vapour, bearing about with them the odour of the wrath of God. If saints are the salt of the earth, they are its putrescence. Why then drag them before the face of Him who will not brook unhumbled iniquity? Why abuse the power committed to the church by putting her seal of authority to their intrusion into her courts; to bring before the eye of God, not the ashes of humiliation, not the tear of penitential sorrow, not the knee of a lowly spirit, but the rod of office, and the tongue speaking proud things, the voice of self-gratulation, and the heart of pride? Surely the world affords sufficient space for their iniquity without planting it, like Antiochus, upon the altar of the Most High.

> Having waste ground enough
> Shall we desire to raze the Sanctuary,
> And pitch our evils there?

It may readily be admitted, that there are difficulties in the way of preserving pure this portion of a sacred ministry; for, in a certain sense, the ministry

of even 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' for the House of God is sacred; but no one will affirm, that these difficulties are insurmountable. Sin cannot be encountered in any form, or under any circumstances, without opposition; but if we are Christians indeed, the divine promises of assistance form an ample incentive to our exertion, and pledge of our success. The darker and more disgusting the complexion of the sin, the less should such difficulties be regarded. Once persuaded that every portion of the service of the sanctuary is sacred, the Christian soldier, instead of stumbling at the first obstruction, should 'set his face like a flint,' and cease not from remonstrance, from entreaty, from every spiritual and legal mode of resistance, till he has freed his own character from the stain of another's transgression. He should remember, that when the sin touches the honour of God, he admits not the faithless cry—'Ah Lord God, I am but a child!' but gives to the bold and persevering his imperishable promise—'I will make thee a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against even the kings, the princes, the priests, and the people of the land.'[1]

It is to be hoped, indeed, that no one would be found hardy enough to defend the practice of admitting characters, openly immoral, into a sacred office. Yet even among those who are not chargeable with undisguised violations of common morality and decency, there is too often a lamentable ignorance of the real nature of those services which are rendered unto God. The Sabbath task is undertaken as a means of gaining a livelihood, or winning human applause; but no thought seems to enter the mind, of the peculiar aim of the duty, the influence it is

[1] Jer. i. 7. 18.

designed to have over the feelings of the people, and the character of Him before whom it is performed. It requires however no laboured argument to show the impiety of such negligence. Were a performer only a piece of live mechanism, he might indeed exercise his talent in a church or an alehouse with equal indifference. He would be as free from responsibility, as the fife which he whistled, or the barrel organ which he worked. He would then in either case, be answering the end of his existence, to produce a given quantity of sound, guided by mechanical laws, and exposed to a variety of accidents, over which he could not be expected to possess any controul. But as he is gifted with a soul which is immortal in its essence, and therefore everlasting in its duration, of such high worth that the Son of God died for it, and of such capacity, that it is itself susceptible of divine love, it stands to reason, that he is a responsible and not a mechanical agent, and that each talent should be returned to the Giver by an application answering strictly to the use for which it is designed. 'Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' [1]

Now this applies peculiarly to all ecclesiastical ministrations. Of the acceptable actions of men there are two kinds, those which directly, and those which indirectly, tend to the divine glory. Thus when we 'eat and drink,' for the purpose of nourishment, we glorify God by acknowledging with thankfulness that our food is his gift; we magnify him in its moderate use, and sanctify it by prayer and praise. But this is an indirect act of piety. No one will presume to say, that his chief design in eating, when hungry, is to perform an act of worship, and not to minister to his bodily sustenance. But when at the table of our

[1] 1 Cor. x. 31.

Lord, we receive of his body broken, and his blood shed for our sins, in that Holy Sacrament we perform an act of direct worship, we offer an unmingled eucharist. Both actions are acceptable before God; but the one has a more celestial character than the other,—has respect to the nourishment of the soul, and not the body, by the mystical union thus typified in the external rite. Now in proportion to the excellence of the action, is the sin of its violation. It is a greater affront to God, to eat with unwashen hands at his sacramental table, than at a man's own table. In the latter case he is dishonouring God, as a God of providence; in the former, he is denying him, as a God of redemption. The musician also is required to honour Jehovah in his private and social performance, but he is not bound at all times to a direct act of worship. He may recreate his mind, like the pious Herbert, with instrumental music, thus indirectly seeking the divine glory, by the thankful exercise of a generous talent; but when he comes into the courts of the temple, then thanksgiving and the voice of melody should be winged like a dart to the throne of the Holy One. Then self-gratification, if it be the main object sought after, is sin. Then the play of the imagination, and the amusement of the ear for their own sake, render the offering polluted. Then if it be acceptable, it is an act of direct worship—it is the absorption of the soul in the divine glory—it is the reflex image of the divine beauty—it is the preparatory song of the celestial espousals—it is the union of the church militant with the church triumphant—it is the echo of that anthem now resounding through the regions of heaven—'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.'[1]

[1] Rev. v. 12.

The excellence of every Church duty is further enforced by considering the sanctity of the place in which it is performed. If we contemplate Jehovah in all his perfections, and then weigh even the meanest of his earthly temples in the balance of such a consideration, what a cloud of glory seems to rest upon them! How hallowed their dedication! How infinitely do they surpass in magnificence the most splendid palaces of the mightiest monarchs! for it may be said of them in an inferior sense, what is said of the Temple of the celestial Sion—'The glory of the Lord doth lighten them, and the Lamb is the light thereof.'[1] Those therefore that minister therein, ought surely, in an especial sense, to be separated from the defilements and vanities of the world—'patterns of every good word and work'—not appointed to their sacred office merely on account of some natural gift, but as combining with such natural gift, an unblemished character before God and before man. If unordained, they yet have voluntarily offered themselves to the Bride of Christ for the service of the Bridegroom, and thus have virtually sworn allegiance to him as their peculiar king. To be careless whom we admit to so holy an employment is in the language of the prophet, 'to offer the blind for sacrifice, and the lame, and the sick,' despite the awful denunciation, 'Cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing; for I am a great king, saith the Lord of Hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen.'[2]

These sentiments may appear, to some, novel and overstrained. With the exception of a few remarks thrown into Prefaces to Selections of Psalms and

[1] Rev. xxi. 23. [2] Mal. i. 13, 14.

Hymns, the press, as well as the pulpit, seems to have granted a tacit immunity to the admission of irreligious characters, into inferior church-offices. But neglect cannot sanctify sin. It presents an additional argument for those, who have any sense of the importance of the subject, to point out the evils, that ignorance may no longer lend its wing to shield a remediable abuse.

Passing by, however, the other subordinate officers of the church, the design of this treatise confines us exclusively to the members of the choir, from the 'singing clerks' of the cathedral, to the ordinary performers in parish churches. Before any effort to reform can prove effectual, it is necessary to understand the nature and extent of the evil to be reformed. With no censorious spirit, but with this single view, we would class the defects of this honoured body of ecclesiastical servants under four heads. I. Want of reverence in the House of God. II. Fondness for display. III. Obstinate rejection of advice. IV. Bad taste.

I. Irreverent behaviour during service has been the cause of scandal in many churches. Whoever has frequented an organ-pew, must have remarked the general indifference of the choir to the devotional exercises in which they are engaged. Great earnestness and activity may indeed be displayed in the act of performance, but, that once ended, there is little to induce an idea, that the other parts of the service are of general concern. The singers busy themselves with the leaves of their music books, or hold conversation in an under tone; while the organist may possibly be engaged in a pantomimic exercise upon his instrument, eagerly thrumming the voiceless keys, and stamping upon the unanswering pedals. How can it be supposed, that such individuals stand

in the same relation to God, as the rest of the people,—that they have any need to confess their sins, to cry for mercy and accept the offers of the gospel, or that they differ in any essential point from the noble instrument around which they congregate? Happily for the congregation, the curtains, carefully drawn, protect them from the scandal which such conduct would otherwise occasion. The singers are thus enabled to monopolize their own disturbances, unchecked by intrusion; and the organist has the range of his instrument without fear of opposition, unless by the bungling or trickery of the worker of the bellows, wind is injected suddenly into the pipes, opening and shutting in answer to the dumb shew of the player; without such an interruption, which is not impossible, this indecent conduct may occasion no greater responsibility, than attaches to individual contempt of proffered mercy.

Yet the very method adopted in our larger churches to accommodate the organist, and prevent incidental disturbance, affords a temptation to an irreligious choir. The plan of enclosing them in a large and roomy seat, so shaded by curtains, as to leave them at leisure for their own purposes, with their box of amusement and the volumes of their craft, however commodious, cannot have a beneficial influence upon minds, naturally indisposed to religious exercises. Those who regard not the eye of God, may yet be awed into decorum by the eye of man. In the great body of the church, there are doubtless many who have no real delight in the service, yet respect to public opinion, if not a sense of religion, is sufficient to produce an appearance of devotion. They would not willingly lower themselves in the presence of those whose esteem and friendship they value.

The practice, however, cannot be expected to extend further than its exciting principle. Place them in a situation where they are not exposed to the animadversions of others, and mere self-respect would hardly prove a sufficient guarantee for proper conduct. Who then can wonder, if the removal of the restraints of worldly opinion has an unfavourable effect upon a choir, destitute of all knowledge of a pure and elevated devotion!

The church under such circumstances would seem to furnish accommodation for impropriety, and invite irreverence by affording appliances. Instead of promoting edification, it becomes undesignedly a party to ungodly practices, and thus frustrates, in particular instances, the very design of its erection.

In country churches, however, it is otherwise; there, if men misbehave, they misbehave in the face of the assembly. They have no dark curtains to screen them from observation. There is no dumb and dead stock, that kindly interposes itself between their irreverence and the notice of the people. If they whisper during service, laugh with each other, twang their instruments in a smothered tone, and show other symptoms of impatience, better discerned than described, it is done more or less openly; if with impunity, yet not with secrecy; if without reproof, yet not without scandal. Perhaps for this reason, such instances are less frequent in the country, than in the city. In either case the true principle of religious obedience may be absent, but there are fewer opportunities for an ungodly exhibition, when he who fears not the eye of God, still shrinks from the captious observance of the eye of his fellow. But whether in the country or in the town, whether noticed or unnoticed by men, the conduct complained of is full of impiety and peril. It is a wanton daring the

thunderbolt of the Almighty; it is a lamentable sporting with the salvation of the soul,—and, if persisted in, must in the end render the most hallowed services the stepping stones to that dreadful abode, where the song is changed into weeping, and the music of the viol into gnashing of teeth.

The custom of admitting women to compose part of the choir has, in many instances, been the cause of much impropriety. The practice is indeed of the very highest antiquity. We learn from the Old Testament, that they had a prominent part assigned to them in the musical performances of the Jews;[1] and we have every reason to conclude, that the services, for which Saint Paul so highly commends certain women, included assistance in the direction of the Church Music.[2] Doubtless it was for general edification, that God gave to the female voice that sweetness, flexibility, and strength of tone, which renders it suited equally to lead, or support, the united chorus of a congregation. Thus, in all ages, the diaconal services of women have been accepted; and, though forbidden to preach, there are numerous passages to show, that the Christian Church early contemplated their assistance in works of devotion and charity. From the terms, however, with which Saint Paul honours his female deacons, we see the high spiritual attainments which they were expected to possess. The expressions, 'helpers in Christ Jesus,' 'labour much in the Lord,' plainly show that the chief requisite for this spiritual service, was not a fine

[1] 1 Sam. xviii. 6. Psalm lxviii. 25. 1 Chron. xxv. 5, 6.

[2] The Author of a 'Brief History of the joint use of precomposed set forms of Prayer,' interprets the expression προφητεύουσα as applied to women, 1 Cor. xi. 5. 'singing of psalms.' He argues that it could not here signify one of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, because those women who had such gifts were expressly forbidden to exercise them in their assemblies. 1 Cor. xiv. 34.—pp. 64—66.

and brilliant voice, but a single eye to the glory of God.[1]

Wherever then particular churches favour this custom, the sanctity of the character should be the first, the temporal gift a secondary inquiry. Even with suitable qualifications, the clergy must see the propriety of employing the services of women in strict subordination. Command is unsuited to the female character; and wherever it has been engrafted upon it in public or private life, it has ever brought a tone of imperiousness along with it, injurious to the individual herself, and offensive to others. Hence a precentor is needed, a man of piety and judgment, who should lawfully assume, and carry due authority in all cases of doubt or dispute. Further, the natural modesty of the female character requires, that in the performance of their sacred duties, 'the singing women' should not be too prominently exposed to public gaze. Nothing is more beautiful and feminine than retiring modesty; if removed, there is no artifice that can compensate for the defect: the jewel has lost its polish. Not even a sacred employment may demand the sacrifice of that glory of the woman which is typified in her long hair.[2] What can be more unpleasing, than to see a female with unabashed front, standing up in the presence of the full congregation, and with outstretched neck, screaming above the voices of the multitude and the swell of the organ, like a seagull in a tempest! How much better, that the diffidence which so well becomes woman in private life, should accompany her to the great congregation; that where her services are needed, they may be afforded without violence to delicate feelings—the curtain screening her from unnecessary observation!

[1] Rom. xvi. [2] 1 Cor. xi. 15.

Where, however, a clergyman discerns no symptom of religious reverence, he would act wisely not to encourage his female choristers. He may thus indeed sacrifice something of musical effect, but he will avoid adding fuel to the flame of levity which, independent of additional excitement, may require all his skill and exertion totally to suppress. The association of idle, thoughtless, and wanton characters of both sexes in the choral service, can only afford a temptation to flightiness and folly, not to say, vice and immorality.

The necessity of restraining children under proper discipline is so universally felt, that where whole schools are permitted to assist the choir, they are placed under the eye of some superior, who is responsible for their conduct. Thus, in many cases, they behave with a decorum worthy of general imitation. Any instance of disobedience is so promptly observed by the master, that the evil is frequently perceived only by the violence of the remedy resorted to; the sound of his lash giving information of actual or dreaded improprieties. If however he would take some pains to anticipate disturbances, by instilling into the minds of the children, proper sentiments of the sanctity of the place and office, it were surely better than such rude interruptions of a sacred service.

Where only a few youths are admitted into the choir, the evil example set by superiors is especially pernicious. In proportion as the danger of open disturbance is less imminent, the young chorister is treated with familiarity, and his presence considered no check upon idle violations of decorum. Whoever has remarked the greediness with which the young imitate and quote the follies of a more mature age, may well tremble for those who thus boldly scatter the seeds of sin. To this cause may possibly be

ascribed the indecorous behaviour of the 'singing boys' of Cathedrals, whose lightminded folly is frequently unchecked by the presence of their superiors, many of whom are clergymen. Why conduct so flagrant, as to excite the notice of individuals standing without the gates, should thus pass unrebuked by those, whose very profession should make them quicksighted and jealous for the honour of their Master, can only be accounted for, by the force of self-accusation, a too general feeling of carelessness, or that morbid dread of interfering in others' labours, which causes the death of many a patient, amid the very multitude of his physicians. When the daily Cathedral service is performed throughout the country with becoming reverence, there will doubtless be an improvement visible in the conduct of the children. At present, like most employments commenced without interest, and carried on as a means of livelihood, it is too often hurried over with precipitance and indecency; and thus, the Psalms, the Canticles, the Chants, and the Anthem, instead of winning and refreshing the soul, become unedifying to the devout, and incongruous to all.

It is evident that no man, who has a proper sense of religious obligation, could persist in conduct so peculiarly irreverential. The origin of this evil therefore must be traced to the admission of ungodly characters into the choir. The priests of Baal ought not to be clad in the vestments of the temple. If, however, they have been admitted, we can only seek some common ground of argument, upon which to convince them of their sin. Where men permit themselves mentally to ridicule the words of devotion which their lips are uttering, they may indeed claim our pity and our prayers, but they seem hopelessly hardened against all reasoning. Between disputants

there must be some point of common agreement. If it be nothing more than consistency of character, it will give ample play to fair and manly discussion. But how is it possible to reason even upon this principle with one, who, while he is in heart an atheist, openly wears the mask of devotion, and engages in an act of Christian worship, for the sake of some paltry hire? Such a character presents no common principle with an honourable man. The truths of revelation, the laws of reason, or the maxims of honour are alike defiled by his touch. He stands forth, one of the most dreadful spectacles on earth—a living embodied lie.

If, however, a chorister professes the Christian faith, and acts not systematically in opposition to its principles, it may be well to propose a few questions for meditation. Is the church a house of worship, or of amusement? If the former, is it of the worship of self, or of God? If God's worship be the object for which the house was erected, is it a worship of which he is conscious or not? If His eye 'searches the hearts and reins,' is His approbation or displeasure the end of the service? If His glory and the edification of the people be designed, can He approve of any portion which does not further that end? Is the spirit or the manner of performance accepted? If the former, in what light will he regard men, who not only reject their Redeemer themselves, but are an hinderance to those 'who would diligently seek him'? Questions like these, answered according to right reason and the word of God, must lead to the conclusion, that by light-minded and irreverential behaviour in the performance of a sacred duty, we are committing a grievous offence 'not only before God, but also before men.'

II. Another source of disgust to well-regulated

minds is, ostentation in the act of performance. It is no unusual circumstance, for a congregation to be obliged to pander to the conceit of a choir, and nurse, however unwillingly, the self-applause of an organ-box. Now of all inanimate creatures, the organ is the best adapted to pourtray the state of mind of the individual who performs upon it. If pride and musical foppery possess the seat of intelligence, the faithful instrument will be sure to proclaim it in the ears of the congregation. The unfortunate player, puffed up with the idea of his own importance, and dazzled with the brilliancy of his talents, is as it were transported into Madame de Genlis' enchanted palace of Truth, where the tongue was the undesigned index of the real intentions of the mind. Every 'fond and frivolous ornament' proclaims his conceit, however he may seek to smother it under high sounding stops, and loaded harmonies. A person accustomed to mark the style in which an organ is played, cannot be insensible to the devotion, or want of devotion of the performer,—a fact worthy of the continual remembrance of every organist.

Nothing can be more revolting to a man, seeking to sustain his devotional feelings for the service in which he is about to engage, than to find his attention most unexpectedly and most unpleasantly attracted to some theatrical exhibition, and his ear filled with the unecclesiastical materiel of some wanton saraband. Under such circumstances the grievance is intolerable; nor can it excite wonder, that some clergymen have altogether dispensed with the voluntary rather than expose the heart to be betrayed by the treachery of the ear. That a man, at such a solemn moment, should exhibit his own dexterity at the expense of the feelings of hundreds, and employ a magnificent instrument, dedicated to God's especial service, to disturb

rather than edify, making it writhe under the torture of some exercise, as little suited to its character, as to the place, may well tempt the application of the words of our great dramatist:

> O but man, vain man,
> Drest in a little brief authority,
> Most ignorant of what he's most assured,
> His glassy essence,—like an angry ape,
> Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven,
> As make the angels weep.

'In Church Music,' says Hooker, 'curiosity and ostentation of art, wanton, or light, or unsuitable harmony, such as only pleaseth the ear, and doth not naturally serve to the very kind and degree of those impressions, which the matter that goeth with it leaveth, or is apt to leave in men's minds, doth rather blemish and disgrace that we do, than add either beauty, or furtherance unto it.'[1]

But the mischief rests not with the profanation of the house, or the disgust of the congregation; it sinks deeper. The minds of the people, instead of being solemnized by the power of soothing harmonies, are frequently enticed by such performances to indulge in associations, the most ungodly and frivolous. Some discern a resemblance to the wanton melodies of the Opera; others call to mind the maudlin sentimentality of some fashionable love song; and the lower orders recognize the jingling rhapsodies of the tavern. And thus music, instead of crushing by its solemn chords the wanton reminiscences that crowd the distempered minds of persons frequenting places of worldly amusement, serves only to draw the most carnal strains from their dens of impurity into the hallowed house of prayer.

The evil arises, in a great measure, from the secular

[1] Ecclesiastical Polity, Book V. Sect. 38.

occupations of our organists. Almost universally professional musicians, eager to multiply the number of their scholars, and increase their reputation for skill, gladly seize advantage of an opportunity, the sacred character of which never enters the mind, for a public exhibition. In this they are unhappily encouraged by many of their hearers, who, equally blind to the importance of the office, have no objection to be occasionally amused by a display of brilliant execution. Conscious, therefore, of the acceptable nature of the bait thus thrown out, what wonder if the organist degrades the church into a concert-room, and so undeniably proves that he

> Tenders more his person's honour, than
> His high profession spiritual.

The other members of the choir in our larger churches have less scope for the display of conceit. When they sing, they have no liberty granted them to modulate their strains according to the vagaries of a wild imagination—their course is chalked out—they are obliged to keep it—and have little time for wanton curvettings, and less for idle roamings. Their assumption of importance forces itself less obtrusively upon the notice; and in most cases, unless the audience is censorious, or the performer extraordinarily imprudent, may pass unobserved. In country churches, however, the case is different. There, if fewer opportunities exist for empty ostentation, those opportunities are employed in a more open and outrageous manner. The farther persons are removed from the refinements of society, the less artful are they to conceal their sentiments. They know nothing of those thousand anxieties and checks, which harass and thwart a man of so-called fine feeling, curbing the natural and open play of his soul, and tempting

him frequently to weigh rather propriety of manner, than truth of idea. They care little for 'the forms and visages of duty,' and are as unreserved in their expressions of self-esteem, as they are unconscious of the effect upon others. If this openness of manner, however, bring the evil directly before a congregation, it is perhaps less offensive than the more disguised foppery of the choristers of the city. The mind is naturally disposed to make some allowances for ignorance and want of breeding, and to consider the rank and situation of the offenders as some slight palliation. Thus ostentation in a country choir is expected almost as a matter of course; besides that there is something more hopeful in this unchecked barbarism, which rather provokes a smile than a sneer. Still it evidences the same want of a genuine conviction of the spiritual importance of the duty; and thus what might be ludicrous under other circumstances, has a widely different character given to it by the time, the place, and the nature of a hallowed service.

The practice, adopted by some country singers, of leaving their own church, and wandering from parish to parish, serves only to feed this fondness for display. It is injurious, alike to their own interests and those of the congregations they frequent. The hope which has induced some clergymen to encourage these vocal visitations is sufficiently visionary. None will learn to exercise their voices by such exhibitions. The nature of the compositions introduced, the style of performance, and the long intervals that occur between the visits, are powerful charms against any actual advantage. On the other hand, the injury sustained by the singers themselves is not slight. Instead of cultivating a particular respect and love to the service of God, by a stated attendance upon Him

in that house, and in that congregation with which they are connected by a variety of relations, they acquire a sickly fondness for novelty, foster their own love of ostentation, and by degrees cease to expect any nourishment from the Sabbath ministrations, beyond the bare husks of self-complacency. Those who, feeling 'the plague of their own heart,' are accustomed to watch with jealousy its workings, would not willingly encourage that natural imbecility which, under the most favourable circumstances, is too apt to secularize the attention. And the most substantial kindness that can be shown to these fugitive performers, is to close the doors of every parish church against them except their own, and oblige them to confine their exertions to their peculiarly allotted sphere. There is hardly a parish in England but possesses within its own compass ample materials for all the purposes of its psalmody, without drawing upon the resources of others.

The man, who is thus prodigal of his vanity, impresses upon the mind the conviction that 'God is not in all his thoughts,' and that 'while he approaches him with his lip, his heart is far from him.' He thus risks 'offending those little ones,' respecting whom our Lord said, 'that it were better a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend them.'[1] How then can Church Music, in any respect, conduce to the grand design for which it was appointed, the edification of the members of Christ's mystical body? And will not worldly men become disgusted, confound the use with the abuse, and thus 'abhor the offerings of the Lord.'[2] Would that those who are set apart to minister in the Temple, were more sensible of the nature of their

[1] Matt. xviii. 6. [2] 1 Sam. ii. 17.

high vocation, and by watching the workings of their feverish self-love, obtain grace to praise him in the assembly of the people with a perfect heart!

III. Connected with the evil noticed above is that extreme jealousy of interference, which renders the labours of a musical reformer, a most severe and self-denying duty. This objection to reform is usually compounded of two ingredients, ignorance and self-conceit. It proceeds from an utter misconception of the real design and nature of the service. Country singers frequently persuade themselves that the psalmody is entirely their province, and reprobate any attempt on the part of the people to unite, as an infringement upon their rights. An instance of this kind came under my own observation, in which a formal complaint was made by the members of a country choir, of assistance gratuitously rendered them by some in the body of the church, whose taste could not screen them from being considered in the light of usurpers of a privilege, which these 'sons of song' had monopolized to themselves. The clergyman, however, before whom the complaint was lodged, did not seem to possess a much more enlightened knowledge of this particular duty, for he admitted the grievance, and suggested to the offending parties the propriety of being silent during the singing of the Psalm. What wonder then if a choir, so uninformed, should spurn the kind offices of those who would speak to them of abuses! Thus many clergymen, who have manfully, but unskilfully, attempted a reformation, have seen cause to rue their imprudence. Wearied out of all patience by the incongruous mummery which has so long passed under the name of Psalm-singing in his church, the minister at length presumes to remonstrate. He mildly points out what he conceives the nature of the grievance, and proposes a remedy. His choir

at first hear him with apparent attention. When alone, however, they put their heads together, to measure their opinions and decide upon the case. Where obstinacy presides, and ignorance and wounded pride are the accusers of plain good sense, the result is easily seen. Many hard words are heaped upon this interference—it is soon settled that 'parson' knows nothing of music—from this, they proceed to the determination that he has no business to meddle, and, a spirit of rebellion rising, they decide to go on in spite of him. He speaks again with somewhat of displeasure, They murmur their sullen insolence; and upon a third, and more decisive remonstrance, if they adopt no more offensive step, desert him altogether, and the singing is in consequence laid aside. It, moreover, not unfrequently happens, that the low spirit of malignity which boils in the breasts of the common people when thwarted, cannot content itself with inert opposition, but bursts forth in secret, or overt acts of annoyance. Not only are his ministrations deserted, but his property injured, and his person insulted, by those who once ranked with him in the service of the sanctuary. He may take up the lament of the Psalmist: 'It was not an open enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it; neither was it he that hated me, that did magnify himself against me, for then peradventure I would have hid myself from him: but it was even thou, my companion, my guide, and mine own familiar friend. We took sweet counsel together, and walked in the house of God as friends.' [1]

Such implacable resentment, however, is happily no necessary consequence of clerical interference; or it were better to sacrifice musical propriety. The

[1] Psalm lv. 12—14.

qualifications already suggested, have surely sufficient virtue to enable him to cope with the roughest opposition, and melt even rudeness and an evil spirit by 'the hot coals' of patient and persevering kindness. If indeed, in spite of every reasonable forbearance, he find it impossible to do justice to the many without offending the few, his way is plain; he must seek for other aid; and with a little attention, he will soon obtain a choir of voices more tractable, sweeter, and less affected, than he is likely to meet with in the common class of country singers. Thus by manifesting his own independence, he may lower their pride; while, by persisting in Christian kindness, he may eventually win them back to resume, not their chief seats of musical parade, but the humble exercise of their talents for the edification of the Church.

If the evil thus noted be less perceived in more polished choirs, it arises chiefly from the absence of such circumstances as call it forth. The great body of the clergy, unskilled in music, shrink from the idea of encountering men of character in this particular profession. They know not what mysterious weapons of defence may be had in reserve; and prefer enduring an undefined grievance, to the chance of a degrading defeat. Forgetting the many accidents that interpose to bias the judgment, they may decide hastily that musicians by profession are the best judges of music and musical proprieties, and thus be disposed to attribute an apparent abuse to their own ignorance of the art.

Another reason may also be assigned, beside the caution of the minister, to account for the fewer scandals of this nature, among the choristers of our towns. In most cases, they are hired: a remuneration, though small, is made them for their services;

and hence they have to balance the injury sustained by offended pride, against the tangible advantages of a certain income. Country singers, on the other hand, give their assistance gratuitously, and feel in consequence a degree of independence, which induces them to spurn alike the remonstrance of the parishioners, and the displeasure of the Bishop.

When an observation is hazarded by the clergyman upon the subject of his Psalmody, it ought certainly to meet with attention and respect, either from a country or a city choir. However unpleasant a rude, dogmatic, or unkind reproof, no man of common consideration would despise a suggestion delivered with meekness, though contrary to his previous habits of thinking. The finer metals are ever brightened by collision; and it is by fair, open, and manly comparisons, that a man acquires a knowledge of what is excellent, and sharpens his desires to attain it. He is indeed to be pitied who satisfies himself with the muddy waters of his own cistern, and with a noble contempt of the very design of his being, closes a flood-gate of conceit against the ocean of truth which lies undiscovered before him. Well said the wise man, 'The ear that heareth the reproof of life, abideth among the wise. He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul; but he that heareth reproof, getteth understanding.'[1]

IV. Bad taste finds ample opportunity for manifesting itself in the choice of tunes, and style of their performance. In almost every department of art and science, simplicity is the very soul of excellence. Nothing is more offensive, or displays greater inexperience, than crowding together meretricious ornaments. No literary composition in which manner

[1] Prov. xv. 31, 32.

predominates over matter, expression over idea, can survive the ephemeral existence which a temporary fame and popularity may assign to it. It decreases with the increase of time. As with writing, so also with painting, sculpture, and music. The noblest monuments in every country, which have best sustained the wear of ages, are simple in design as in execution. Thus what Boyle observes of the Scripture, applies equally to Church Music. 'As the load-stone not only draws, what the sparklingest jewels cannot move, but draws stronglier when armed with iron, than crowned with silver, so the "Music of the Church" is not only movinger, than the glitteringest human styles, but hath oftentimes a potenter influence on men in those passages, that seem quite destitute of ornaments, than in those where "musical" rhetoric is conspicuous.'[1]

Now it often happens, that the whole character of a tune, in itself chaste and ecclesiastical, is destroyed by a tasteless performance; and it is to performance alone that our attention is at present directed. Music in this particular has to contend with disadvantages, utterly unknown to any other art or science. It has to struggle with an evil of so surmounting a nature, as in many cases to overpower, and entirely pervert the designed effect. In other arts, the subject of examination presents itself to the examiner for an opinion founded upon its naked merits, untouched but by the hand of its master. The critic may pass his judgment indeed, and it may be unfavourable; yet the stain is but the stain of opinion. He may not apply his hand to it—he may not alter a feature,—he may not compose or discompose a line. However prejudice may be excited, the

[1] Boyle on the Style of Holy Scripture.

artist has this consolation, that after even the rudest criticism, the performance passes on to the next individual who proposes himself for a judge, the identical piece which was moulded under his hand. There it stands to corroborate or confute, according to its genuine deserts, the former unfavourable opinion. All are invited to criticise, but none may presume to obliterate, or add the smallest point. The object of examination remains as it was found; and an unkind censure may be contested on the spot, by those who have equal access to the parts animadverted upon, and equal ability to determine their merits. Thus the poet presents his production to the reader. in the full confidence that, although it may be disfigured in the delivery by rude pronunciation, false accent, and bad taste, it is in effect the identical performance which issued from his pen, unaltered in substance, however varied in expression. The musical composer, on the other hand, whatever his affection for his offspring, and whatever genius he may have brought to its conception, cannot 'lay this flattering unction to his soul.' He is not merely subjected to the common alembic of criticism—he is not merely at the mercy of the casual performer as to rhythm and effect and accent—but he has to endure, and even tacitly countenance, the bold introduction of a licence, which each musician gratuitously assumes to himself, of superadding notes, shakes, turns, runs, and cadences of his own fancy, with one only restriction, that these superfluities are all crammed into some given space of time. Thus, in many instances, the performance, so far from delivering the genuine sense of the composition, as it came fresh from the pen of the writer, is buried under a mass of idle decorations, and rambling commonplaces. Most composers, knowing that every man who calls himself musical,

from the ignoble bagpiper to a first-rate performer, has a reservoir of such ornament, in self-defence, and that his kindness may be duly appreciated, leaves unclosed a number of sluices under the term *ad libitum*, in hope that, through these openings, the superfluous store of musical feeling may be ejected. The so-called cadences, introduced by celebrated singers into the airs of the mighty Handel, may thus seem to claim a tacit, if not an actual permission on the part of the author*;—but it is a permission, not so much of composition, as of execution. Handel had too much respect for public feeling, too much contempt for the inventive talents and modesty of public singers, and too much insight into his own hasty temper, to permit either himself or his audience to be abused by the miserable trimmings that disfigure the modern performance of his oratorios. Where he intended a cadence, he placed one, in accordance with the style of his own magnificent genius and the character it assumed in the particular composition. The singer, if he had a vocal overflow, might direct it in these channels if he pleased. But Handel never supposed, and could never have endured, the hundredth part of those rambling interminable violations of time, tune, propriety, and musical good sense, which are rolled out of the throats of the favorites of the present day, and applauded with such rapturous exultation by the multitude, that you no longer wonder at the low state of music in this country, when the chief part of Handel's pieces, that meet with public approbation, are such as Handel never wrote, and as Handel never could have written. So great, however, has been the enthusiasm excited among amateurs by these cadences, and so gainful have they proved to the men of sound, that modern composers exhibit the greatest condescension to

popular taste,—and beside rambling themselves over every variety of wanton and unintelligible jargon, leave the singer full liberty to detain the assembly in the 'wildering mazes' of his extemporaneous labyrinth, so long as he perceives by the sparkle of the eye, and the erection of the ear, the continuance of public approbation.

While these liberties were only taken with operas and oratorios, the outrage was rather against good taste, than religious decorum. But when Church Music was made the tool for this display, the sanctity of the temple gave an air of decided impiety to the violations of taste. The services, in one most important particular, lost their sacred character. The anthem, the chant, and the psalm, became secularized, and the music of the sanctuary differed in no essential respect from the music of a vain and empty world.

Yet however persons may differ respecting this profusion of ornament, when applied to secular compositions, there can surely be but one opinion as to their admission into the Church. Sacred music, as a medium of divine communications, ought to possess a character of its own—so distinct from the music of the concert room, as in no respect to recal vain and idle associations. The same marked contrast should be visible in the style of performance. Any attempt to assimilate the service of Jehovah to the amusements of the theatre, is in effect to associate God and Mammon. It is to make the Holy One pander to human iniquity—it is to point the weapons of His warfare against His servants—it is to fill the vessels of the temple with the wine of a Belshazzar's banquet—it is, in the expressive language of scripture, 'to bring the hire of a whore, and the price of a dog into the house of the Lord our God.'[1]

[1] Deut. xxiii. 18.

The practice, which obtains in many places, of hiring singers from the theatre or opera-house, to perform upon festival days in the church, is especially to be deplored, as one grand source of the evil complained of. It can never be expected of such characters, that they should at once exclude from their minds, the levity, impurity, vanity, and cringing obsequiousness of their daily occupation, and assume the merest particular of that solemnity, devotion, and holy affection, without which all sacrifice is 'abomination unto the Lord.' Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? The same fondness for vain and frivolous compositions—the same love for ostentatious decorations—the same grasping after human applause and human reward, which are fostered by theatrical performances, must necessarily pursue the musician into his engagement in higher duties. The more so, as between his casual connection with the Church, and his stated connection with the opera, there is so close an analogy, that in either case, he perceives the beauty of his voice, and not the morality of his conduct, is the grand subject of inquiry. The consequences are such as may be expected. The church for the day is turned into a theatre. The singers seek but the gratification of the popular taste—the audience listen with admiration, and are hardly prevented from the expression of their delight, by some confused remembrance of the sanctity of the house; and thus there is so mutual and entire a return of good offices between the choir and the congregation, and the congregation and the choir, as totally to shut out all remembrance of Him who sitteth between the cherubim, and to reject Him from the place of His holiness. A proclamation has been made of a feast to the Lord, and like the Israelites, 'the people have sat down to eat and to drink

and are now risen up to play.' But the eye of Him who watched the idolatrous worship of his stiff-necked people around their molten calf, rests with the same displeasure upon this wanton sacrifice to the idol self. And what if the words rise to His lip: 'Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them!'[1] 'This is,' to use the words of Mr. Bedford, 'a strange following of Christ and Baal, a serving of God and Mammon, a reconciling of Christ with Belial, and light with darkness. It is to sing Hosannah to Christ for the sake of the loaves, and after that to betray Him to be crucified.'[2]

The prevalence of a frivolous taste among organists, is the more to be regretted, from the influence possessed over the mind by the mere powers of the instrument. Ecclesiastical music, as has been already observed, is of a perfectly distinct character from theatrical. The preservation of this distinction depends mainly upon the organist. It is his duty to mark it by broad and intelligible lines, so that the instrument may speak a language comprehended by the devout, however dark and uninteresting to the profane. Yet it not unfrequently happens, that this distinction is confounded by the very individual whose duty it is to observe it, but who, from the want of a devotional spirit, burdens a sacred composition with secular ornaments. Place before him, a tune of the genuine Church character, rich in full and harmonious chords, and instead of retaining its majestic simplicity, he treats it as a mere ground for his variations. He has no idea of confining his talents to the province assigned him, as a channel for communicating the mind of the composer to the mind

[1] Exodus xxxii. 10.

[2] Abuse of Musick, p. 207.

of the hearer, but proceeds to crowd a chorale, the burden of which is best understood by the absence of every kind of decoration, with such a multitude of turns, flourishes, interludes, shakes, trills, appoggiaturas, and other expletive notes, that the unfortunate tune is totally overwhelmed under a mass of ill-judged musical commentary. This mode of clothing a simple and sublime composition, instead of adding to its beauty, and exciting additional devotion in the minds of the people is but

> The ivy which has hid its princely trunk,
> And sucked the verdure out on't.

The design of the Psalmody is frustrated. The congregation are unable to understand, and cease to accompany it. The imagination indeed may be amused, but the heart remains uninterested, while the attention is distracted and overwhelmed. This rage for excessive ornament has so vitiated the taste, that in some cases, less skilful organists play with greater simplicity, and therefore in a more ecclesiastical manner than men of superior science and more flippant finger. Conviction of their own incapacity, if not a correct judgment, confines them to an exact imitation. Thus a superficial examination might lead to the conclusion that good taste is in inverse ratio to knowledge; which however is a parodox only in appearance. The fact is, that music resembles every other art. The farther a person advances in the study of it, the more does he delight in simplicity of manner, the less is he attracted by superficial ornament, and the more fastidious does he become of coxcombry and conceit.

Now if the interpolations introduced by men of some character for musical skill, of however subordinate a kind, have the effect of maiming a compo-

sition, what can be expected of those who have neither knowledge of the science nor idea of correct taste, and whose habits of life necessarily confine them to view objects through the gross medium of their inbred and inwrought prejudices? It stands to reason that, where a real or imaginary *ad libitum* is left to such characters, the violation of the design must be totally at variance with propriety of execution, no less than composition. 'A critical taste,' vague as the expression may be, 'does not depend' according to Burke 'upon a superior principle in man, but on superior knowledge. The principle of the knowledge of things represented or compared is very much accidental, as it depends upon experience and observation; and not on the strength or weakness of any natural faculty; and it is from this difference in knowledge, that what we commonly, though with no great exactness, call a difference in taste proceeds.'[1] This observation applies admirably to music. The common class of country singers know nothing of theoretical, and little of practical music. They have never studied it. They are unacquainted with its principles. They have neither examined, nor compared its models of excellence. And yet, as dogmatism is ever combined with ignorance, they see no defect in their taste, and shrink not from claiming the same liberty assumed by others, of throwing in, according to their notions of beauty, shakes, turns, cadences, and other frivolous ornaments. They have not indeed the same field for display enjoyed by a Catalani. They are confined within the narrow limits of a few ungenerous tunes, which allow not for the effervescence of genius, and stubbornly refuse room for long straggling interludes—but they run to

[1] Burke on the Sublime.

the full extent of their line. If neither time nor place are set apart for their manœuvres, the composition itself pays the penalty. No part of it escapes the attempt to introduce 'the graces;' and thus the solemn chords of a good tune lose at once their character of stability, and are most rudely frothed into absurd decorations. In enumerating these several flourishes, the mind is uncertain how to draw the line between an attempted ornament, and an undesigned defect. Others must decide how to classify the following. Trilling upon each syllable, no uncommon vice among country singers—running a third above the note, and thus by a sort of triplet assimilating the tune to the measure of a Scotch reel—raising the voice beyond its proper pitch—making unnecessary and unmarked passing notes—dwelling upon the concluding letter of the last word of a line, and suddenly with a jerk tagging it to the beginning of the next —resting upon unimportant notes—breaking the time of the tune—singing in an uneven tone—throwing out the power of the lungs at the commencement of a word, and thus, from sheer lack of breath, sinking it before the close—not measuring strength, but disjoining syllables without mercy.

These, among other instances of bad taste, might readily be avoided by a little attention. The mode of pronunciation and general performance must doubtless be expected to assume a more marked character of coarseness in the country than in the town. But this only proclaims the greater necessity for care and cultivation. And, though in itself it may appear a matter of small moment, yet whatever serves to pervert the sense of the words, or change the character of the melody, should be carefully avoided, as a needless stumbling block to the general edification.

Has then this cultivation of a correct taste in music, any influence over devotional feeling? Undoubtedly it has. The violation of it is frequently a hinderance to devotion. There is a principle in the human breast, which, without musical cultivation, will reprove incongruities in the performances of a choir. Few persons, whose minds are not totally vitiated, but shrink involuntarily from conduct that gives the lie to profession. Whether actuated by a spirit of genuine Christianity or not, men of honour despise violations of decency, in times, places, and persons. No one, for instance, but he whose feelings are as coarse as his opinions are unsound, can tolerate the clergyman who, in contempt of his official character, is found at the turf, the play, or the gaming table. His conduct is a living lie to his profession, and, at once proclaims him unworthy of confidence. The man, whatever his rank or property, who demeans himself by low debaucheries, descends to the tricks of sharpers, treats inferiors with insolence, and superiors with cringing flattery, is written out of the list of gentlemen, as one who breaks the charter of honorable rights. Consistency is the very soul of society. He who systematically dishonors his profession, whether in the higher or lower walks of life, forfeits at once his title to general respect. Now the same contempt for inconsistency attaches to things, as to persons. An honorable, though worldly-minded man, would as little endure the profanation of the church by the introduction of a play, as to be greeted with a sermon when he enters the theatre. It is not that he condemns either the sermon or the play abstractedly. He may be as little affected by the morality of the one, as disgusted by the immorality of the other. It is not his religion that is stumbled, but his taste; and yet this is suffi-

ciently powerful to make him spurn so wanton a violation of common proprieties. His feelings are similarly outraged, if the light and frivolous strains which have been accustomed to attract his notice in the Opera-house, amid all the circumstance of sensual indulgence, are poured forth from a hallowed instrument, in a hallowed house, and on a hallowed day. His sense of the fitness of things is disturbed. He looks round upon the solemn emblems of a sacred service, calls to mind the use to which they have been devoted, the object for which the people are assembled, and feels a disgust which, though it originate in taste, serves to destroy or deaden whatever religious impression may have been wrought upon his mind.

With what indignation then must not a Christian in heart, who possesses in its purity the spring of all gentlemanly feeling, regard offences, condemned even by men who are jealous of human consistency, rather than of the glory of God? How must it grate upon his ear to be made a party to theatrical exhibitions, when, from conscientious scruples, he forsakes places set apart for their legitimate introduction! What a stumbling-block must it not be to him, to find the world with its vain and filthy allurements, chasing him even into the house of prayer! and what wonder if the spirit be disturbed, the devotion interrupted, the general character of Church Music destroyed, and the soul sickened by the wanton abuse of the most cheering and elevating portion of the worship of Almighty God!

It were well then, if those who offer themselves for any subordinate service in the Church, would spend a few thoughts upon the nature and design of the desired employment. They should consider, that such an offer is, in effect, to dedicate themselves, body,

soul, and spirit, to God—to vow, whatever may have been their previous character, from henceforth to live to his glory. They should remember the unvaried declarations of Jehovah in his holy word, that as he is a Spirit, they that worship him acceptably, must worship him in spirit and in truth. They should never forget, that, as they are assuming to themselves to direct, in some degree, the devotions of the people, a heavy weight of responsibility must rest upon them for the manner in which they shall perform their several duties; and that, if by a light-minded, vain, or careless demeanour, they are an offence to even the weakest member of the Church, the broad eye of God, which slumbers not, is especially kindling upon them as his peculiar servants. They should therefore seek the divine blessing in the commencement of their labours, and never enter the sanctuary without impressing upon their minds the admonition of scripture: 'keep thy foot when thou goest into the house of God, and be not hasty to give the sacrifice of fools, for they consider not that they do evil.'[1] It especially becomes them to examine strictly into the nature of their faith, and decide its character, not by a hasty glance at the immensity of the divine mercy, magnifying one attribute while they depreciate another, or a self-indulgent estimation of their self-named good works, but by the only biblical test, a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness, evidenced by 'that repentance toward God, and unfeigned faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,'[2] which is the alone ground-work of all acceptable service.

Were such a method generally observed by our churchwardens, sextons, clerks, singers, organists, and others in responsible situations, how hallowed would

[1] Eccles. v. 1. [2] Acts xx. 21.

our services become—how blessed the exercise of prayer and praise—how intimate the union between the pastor and his assistants—how would they build up each other in their most holy faith—and how amply would not the smile of the Divine countenance rest upon duties, the most minute, as well as important of which were undertaken in a spirit of 'love to God, and love to the brethren.' Is such a prospect Utopian? Give it at any rate a fair trial. Let there be more jealousy among those who are commissioned to choose officers for the Lord's house. Let men be appointed for their piety, as well as their skill! Let not natural talent be suffered to throw a cloak over spiritual or moral turpitude. Let all the measures adopted be sanctified by the prayer of faith and the word of God; and we shall soon be enabled to say with one, who though a king, did not disdain to serve the Lord in his temple; 'Blessed is the man that putteth his trust in thee.' [1]

> Our doubts are traitors,
> And make us lose the good we oft might win,
> By fearing to attempt.

[1] Psalm lxxxiv. 13.

V.

THE CONGREGATION.

Lord, by every minstrel tongue,
Be thy praise so duly sung,
That thine angels' harps may ne'er
Fail to find fit echoing here.
* * * * *
But should thankless silence seal
Lips, that might half heaven reveal
* * * * *
Then waken into sound divine,
The very pavement of thy shrine,
Till we, like heav'n's star-sprinkled floor,
Faintly give back what we adore.
Child-like though the voices be,
And untuneable the parts,
Thou wilt own the minstrelsy
If it flow from child-like hearts.

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.

'A VOICE came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying: Alleluia! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!'[1] Such is the description in the visions of St. John of the psalmody of heaven, and it invites a comparison with the general thanksgiving of the nominal servants of God upon earth.

[1] Rev. xix. 5, 6.

We naturally deem such enjoyments, as most nearly approximate to those of heaven, the least stained with imperfection. Of heaven, and the joys of heaven, we have literally no source of information but the sacred writings. There we read enough to make a Christian earnestly long to become a partaker of the 'inheritance of the saints in light,' but not enough to gratify the vain curiosity and idle imaginations of the mere natural man. We are told primarily, what shall constitute its negative felicity—the absence of sin with all its concomitants. We are told further, what shall constitute its positive felicity, holy love and holy music, the one the grand source, and the other the grand expression of celestial enjoyments.

> What know we of the blest above,
> But that they sing, and that they love?

Now this casts around music a halo of peculiar brightness. It marks the sacredness of its character, and the immortality of its existence. It allures us to its exercise by the superiority of its claims over those of every other earthly accomplishment—not the creature of a day, the hand-maid of a state of imperfection, perishing with the life to which it is attached; but the present harbinger, and the future associate, of an eternity of unmingled felicity. Considering it in this light, what other art can vie with it in importance? The very nature of painting and sculpture, points out their ephemeral existence. The noblest specimens which we possess, are but imitations of the divine workmanship, however admirably adapted to our present state of being, where we stand so greatly in need of steps to raise our ideas to holy contemplations; and where representations of created beauty act as links

between us and those elevating views of the divine character, which beget in the breast 'love to him that loved us.' They must therefore cease with that imperfection which renders them serviceable. In the next world, where love will be the very atmosphere we breathe, and where we shall rush at once into the most intimate and extatic contemplations of the divine beauty, what influence can be imagined of sufficient power to allure us to the admiration of created skill? The whole field of creation, as it came fresh from the divine hand, presenting bright and unstained reflections of him, the source of consummate happiness, will lie spread before us in all its breadth and beauty. Who then would turn aside to view the same objects through the density of even an archangelic medium? Who would exchange for a moment the workmanship of the Creator, for the noblest monument of the skill of the creature? Here on earth, we cannot indeed 'look upon God and live;' and thus when he reveals himself, it is by reflex images, putting us in the cleft of the rock, hiding us in the hollow of his hand, permitting us only to view the glory of his train.[1] But in heaven, the eye will be moulded to look undazzled upon the object of its adoration; and thus, to shade it in its celestial and unabated strength, when the divine glory unfolds itself as its life and light, would be a voluntary and sinful humility, a praiseless subjection, and depreciation of the noblest gift. Thus throughout the Scripture, we find no argument for the immortality of the sister arts. The judgment denounced upon 'all pleasant pictures' in that day, 'when the Lord ariseth to shake terribly the earth' may therefore be considered as final and irreversible.[2] But Music, the most enchanting

[1] Exodus xxxiii. 22, 23.

[2] Isaiah ii. 16.

vehicle for the communication of ideas, as well as the most natural and refreshing mode of utterance to an overflowing soul, derives authority from its very nature, no less than from Holy Writ, for its eternal duration.

We are moreover not left to vague conjecture, as to the character it assumes in the abodes of the blessed. We are expressly informed, that it is not merely the music of the voice, but the music of the hand,—instrumental as well as vocal. 'I heard,' says the Apostle, 'the voice of harpers, harping upon their harps.'[1] It has however been objected to such passages, that they are merely figurative, and cannot be considered as conclusive of the existence of what we term music in heaven. Now even allowing for a moment, that the Apostle makes use of metaphorical language, yet the argument will not greatly suffer. If the whole scene were purely visionary, and had no existence but in the mind of the dreamer, yet no one will venture to assert, that it was the wild and fortuitous play of a poetic fancy. No one would presume, that the emblems were wantonly employed, and not under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit. *There* was the Saviour, and there were his redeemed people magnifying his name. Whatever was the mode of their expression, the Apostle heard it, understood its meaning, and was influenced by its power. If it were purely of a celestial and spiritual character, still to render it intelligible he would naturally search for some earthly object, whose effects might approximate most nearly to those experienced by him. He had the whole range of nature, physical, moral, and intellectual, whence to draw his comparison. Many are the ways in which men express

[1] Rev. xiv. 2; v. 8, 9.

their feelings—many the sources of excitement—but St. John knew of none that so closely represented this indescribable chorus as music—the voice of the song and of the harp. However, therefore, the harmonies of heaven and those of earth may vary in degree, there must, by every principle of interpretation, be admitted some analogy in kind,—if only that between a type and its reality—a shadow and its substance. And thus it may be boldly assumed, that nothing in the whole compass of nature bears so near a resemblance to the celestial mode of thanksgiving as music;—an idea, in perfect conformity with right reason, which comprehends not, how there can exist an expression of praise without utterance, or harmony without sound.

But what is the great stumbling-block to the literal interpretation of this clear passage? St. John declares positively, that, in his trance, being admitted into heaven, he heard 'the voice of harpers harping upon their harps;'—what causes us in this case to swerve from plainly understanding what he plainly declares? Its materiality! It reduces heaven to earth! It makes its enjoyments to consist of sensual rather than spiritual gratifications.—When, however, we examine the origin of this morbid dread of admitting earthly notions into our conceptions of heaven, we find it arise merely from the close connection in this life between materialism and sin. The senses are here so much under an evil influence, that we cannot imagine their existence and perfect vigour in a state of absolute purity. Hence, for fear of falling into the gross ideas of a Mohammedan Paradise, we are apt to satisfy ourselves with ill-defined conceptions of the joys of the other world, and fearlessly explain away even the little information contained upon the subject in scripture. 'The common imagination that we have

of paradise on the other side of death, is that of a lofty aerial region, where the inmates float in ether, or are mysteriously suspended upon nothing—where all the warm and sensible accompaniments which give such an expression of strength, and life, and colouring, to our present habitation, are attenuated into a sort of spiritual element, that is meagre and imperceptible, and utterly uninviting to the eyes of mortals here below—where every vestige of materialism is done away, and nothing left but certain unearthly scenes that have no power of allurement, and certain unearthly extacies, with which it is felt impossible to sympathize.'[1] Sufficient authority, however, have we for the conjecture, that the paradise of the just will be material, as well as spiritual, in its nature; wherein all our senses, restored to their primæval goodness and exercise, will be endowed with a capability to aid, not to impede the spirit, in the unlimited devotion of all its faculties to the worship and the love of God. It is revealed to us and to our children, that 'our bodies shall be raised incorruptible;'—an immaterial body is a contradiction in terms—and that for their reception with all their active, refined, and sinless senses, a material abode will be prepared, 'new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.'[2] And since our material frames have once existed free from sin and sorrow, so there is nothing incongruous or revolting in the supposition, that the time may again come, when, with all their present faculties in full and stainless perfection, they may inhabit a terrestrial paradise. Sin defiled and so changed the nature of man, but did not destroy it. The senses were identically the same after the fall, as before it—the leprosy covered the whole garment, but

[1] Chalmers' Sermons. (St. John's) p. 196. [2] 2 Peter iii. 13.

the web was firm; and thus, as by the body we can only understand the combination of the several parts of which it is composed, so, in the firm belief of the resurrection of the body, we look forward to the resurrection of each sense in its perfection, and the full provision of suitable objects of the same class and character, as those which now gratify and allure.

Nor can this consideration offend the natural feelings of any individual; but, on the contrary, 'holds out a warmer and more alluring picture of the elysium that awaits us, when told that there will be beauty to delight the eye, and music to regale the ear; and the comfort that springs from all the charities of intercourse between man and man, gladdening each other with the benignant smiles that play on the human countenance, or the accents of kindness that fall in soft and soothing melody from the human voice. But though a paradise of sense, it will not be a paradise of sensuality.'[1] 'There may be audible music in heaven, but its chief delight will be in the music of well-poised affections, and of principles in full and consenting harmony with the laws of eternal rectitude.'[2]

With the fact of the existence of instrumental and vocal music, our knowledge of the harmonies of heaven terminates. Of the peculiar character of the compositions, we possess no information. In this world, degrees of tastes and skill are to be met with in every art; but, if it be once admitted that music forms a part of the celestial services, it must surely bear that stamp of perfection, which is the essential characteristic of heaven. We cannot imagine, that there will echo throughout the courts of Zion any

[1] Chalmers' Sermons, (St. John's) pp. 205, 206. [2] Ib. p. 212.

sound that resembles the mean and licentious ditties of the tavern, or the more refined but equally vain melodies of the opera—any thing, in short, that is inferior to the sublimest strains of our richest ecclesiastical harmonies.

The comparison then purposed to be drawn from the passage which heads this chapter, respects not the mechanism of the composition, of which we are necessarily ignorant, but one characteristic of the performance, namely, its universality. The voice went forth, 'Praise our God, *all* ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great;' and the response was so immediate, so full, so overwhelming to the apprehensions of the raptured Apostle, that it sounded to him, 'as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings'—and yet so clear and distinct, that he was able to mark the very expressions of this sublime Alleluia. The command was universal, and the obedience was universal. No one voice, 'amid the great multitude' of the 'servants of God,' was silent. All, whatever their rank in the celestial Jerusalem, or the varied nature of their capabilities, '*all*, both small and great,' united in this glowing song of 'Praise unto their God.'

From this description of the psalmody of heaven, we may gather the true character of an acceptable service of the same nature upon earth, whether the Holy One best approves the limited and listless singing of many of our assemblies, or that universal and hearty concurrence of lip and soul, which admits of some distant comparison with 'a celestial concert.' And if psalmody be thus imperfect when it is not universal, what hope of acceptance when it is indolently partial, as is too frequently its character among us in a degree, greater than can be accounted for, by the mere natural imperfection of earthly services?

But the mind of God in this particular may be discerned not merely in the revelation of hidden things, but in the narrative of an historical fact. The ceremony of the dedication of the Temple at Jerusalem by Solomon was ushered in by a loud thanksgiving from 'the Levites, with the singers,' to whom alone was entrusted this part of the sacred service. 'They, arrayed in white linen, having cymbals, and psalteries, and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets. It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers *were as one, to make one sound* to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord—that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord.'[1] What greater evidence could Jehovah vouchsafe of his approbation of an unanimous thanksgiving, than the immediate gift of his glorious presence!

We assume not from these and similar instances, that the mere sound, however general, is pleasing to Him who 'looketh on the heart;' but that it accords less with His will, that the affection of the spirit should burn away its strength, like a hidden fire smouldering in its own ashes, than that it should burst forth a bright flame, increasing by the very emission its intensity and volume.

But what is our imitation of the harmonies of heaven? We see that *they* are borne along by the unanimous voices of ten thousand times ten thousand —in what manner are our harmonies supported by the great body of the people? Suppose an angel, flying upon some mission, to stoop his wing and lend an ear on the Christian sabbath to a large congregation assembled for divine worship. He hears them invited

[1] 2 Chron. v. 12, 13.

to unite in singing that anthem 'to the praise and glory of God,' which has just died upon his lips, and can never die in his heart. He waits for the response. 'The priest, the minister of the temple' withdraws. Of the people, some arise at the summons, their eye directed toward the organ, the lips of a few indicating an interest in the service—others remain upon their seats in various postures, denoting apathy or weariness. The organist busies himself with his instrument. The singers ply their allotted tasks, and the general activity in the gallery would seem to argue, that the exercise was not utterly devoid of significancy. But how languid an apology would this appear for the united energies of the whole congregation! Sound indeed there may be—a careless attempt to supply a vacuum —but where is that combination of voice and concentration of spirit, which could alone produce such harmony, as would find in the breast of an angel a responsive chord? There he finds it not. The high praises of God are not universally in the mouths of his people. How then would he explain this anomaly, and reconcile it in his own mind with the lofty name and profession of Christian? Can we imagine that he would adopt a worldly line of reasoning, and deem, according to modern notions of charity, that the flame of divine love may burn hot within the breast, and yet consist, when an opportunity for expression presents itself, with a closed lip and silent tongue? Would he argue about customs, and imaginary proprieties, and worldly fashions—that divine homage may yield to human convenience, the divine commands, to human prejudices, and yet 'the love of God be shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost?' Or would it not better accord with godly jealousy to suspect, that where there is so partial an expression of gratitude, the sense of it can never be universal—

that where so animating a subject calls forth such a vapid thanksgiving, there can exist no knowledge of a pure and elevated devotion?

Perhaps, however, upon a more minute examination of the characters of which the congregation is composed, his opinion might change. Every such assembly consists of two classes of individuals—those who are able to aid the general thanksgiving, and those who are incapacitated by natural or superinduced physical infirmity. There may be persons who, with an intimate relish for the things of God, have so deep a sense of their want of vocal power, as 'while their heart is hot within them, to hold their tongue, and sing nothing, though it be pain and grief to them.' To pronounce a severe judgment therefore upon such, would be in the highest degree uncharitable. But their number is incomparably small. The great body of the silent members of a congregation could not cloak themselves under such a garb. They would appear before an inquiring eye, which could search into the undisguised habitude of the mind, perfectly unable to claim any interest in this excuse.

Here is one, whose parents have spared no pains to improve a naturally melodious voice,—who has enjoyed a long course of practice under able masters,—who is ever ready to exercise her talent in evening routs and assemblies, to warble forth the delights and romances of love, and to cherish the self-complacency excited by universal admiration,—but where is her voice now? Now is the time for its hallowed exercise, when earthly love and folly are forbidden to approach, and the love, the wisdom, and the glory of God are presented as the subjects of praise by circumstance, by place, and by sacred admonition. Now is the time to offer the gift to the Giver on the altar of a grateful heart. And yet there is

no movement of the lip, no expression of the eye to denote energy and interest. The voice of thanksgiving is dumb; and not only is the individual herself deprived of the blessings which wait upon this duty, but those who might be edified and encouraged by her example, are chilled and offended at her neglect, according to the quaint language of Herbert,

> He that to praise and laud thee doth refrain,
> Doth not refrain unto himself alone,
> But robs a thousand, who would praise thee fain,
> And doth commit a world of sin in one.

Perhaps her musical instructor himself is present, where is his voice? Oh! he must preserve it for his practice. He sings not without hire, or

> if he sings,
> 'Tis like a chime a mending.

We need not ask what judgment an angel could pass upon such conduct; for the cases are sufficiently palpable to draw from men the conclusion, that there is sin in this silence.

But why are these cases cited? Because they evince more strongly than any other the folly, as well as the sin of fashion, and afford the most undeniable proof of the deplorable infatuation, with which Satan hoodwinks the eyes of men. Here are talents acknowledged and prided in,—cultivated in the one instance for support, and in the other for self-gratification—exercised for the empty bubble of human applause, and the poisonous pleasures of vanity,—yet withheld, systematically withheld when the noblest opportunity is afforded for presenting them to the God who gave them. 'All that hath voice praise the Lord,' is the injunction of the inspired psalmist. Some plead, for their disobedience, vocal incapability; but when God has given a voice, endowed it with a rich, and voluble melody, bestowed it gratuitously,

and yet with a specific object, to promote his glory and his alone; what greater proof of folly can exist, than for one so honoured, to expend its powers in warbling the effusions of vice and absurdity, mantled in a flimsy robe of sentimentality and romance,—and on the day of God, in the assembly of his people, remain mute during the chanting of his praises!

In such instances, and they unhappily extend far beyond the two classes of characters which have furnished an illustration, there is a degree of consistency, which reconciles in some respect the contemplative mind. The heart that is busied in youthful follies, and loves to spend its energies in balls and concert rooms, cannot have its treasure in the heavens, or feel any interest in those joys, whose high purity rejects with abhorrence, the contaminating touch of a soul devoted to the world. It is consistent, therefore, that lips ever open in the service of sin, should remain closed during the worship of God.

May not, however, in some cases a less blamable reason be assigned for this silence, than contempt or indifference? Undoubtedly the principle must determine the character of an action; and we ought not too rashly to pass judgment upon even an apparently palpable case. May there not exist some other motive for withholding the song of praise, than physical inability or wilful negligence? Perhaps ignorance of duty; and however anxious the stated churchgoer may be to attend to his religious obligations, it may never enter his mind, that he is called upon to join his voice to that of the regularly paid choir, and thus perform what seems to him a work of supererogation. Now it may be fearlessly asserted, that such an arithmetical mode of computing the obligations under which we lie to a God of infinite mercy, can never obtain with one who is influenced by the Spirit.

It belongs to a school, whose maxims, once too prevalent throughout the country, substituted a dry, barren, and wearisome round of duties in the place of those genuine works of holiness, which spring naturally from a true and lively faith. It can operate in the conduct of those only, who, ignorant of the way of salvation by Christ Jesus, and the liberty of the gospel of life, 'go about to establish their own righteousness,' and seek ever and anon to balance an even account between God and Satan, the Saviour and the world. It can consist only with an utter ignorance of the fallen nature of man, a vain resting in human works, and that ruinous 'agreement with hell,' into which so many enter to serve mammon during the week, and God upon the sabbath,—to follow the whole routine of the world's diversions, from the theatre to the card table, till seven days before some great festival, during which there is a forced and peevish restraint upon the inclinations, in order to make themselves fit to approach the table of the Lord, with a sacramental volume in their hands, and the world in their hearts! How different this from that 'faith which worketh by love!' Our Lord declared, and all his followers have experienced the truth of his words, that when the heart is full, the mouth will overflow; and it is impossible to conceive a soul filled with heavenly affections, coolly numbering up the amount of performed duties, and, when an occasion is afforded in the great congregation, designedly withholding the song of praise. Praise is no slavish service to the child of God. It is as natural and unstudied an expression of the feelings of a devout soul, as any other effect that proceeds directly from its cause. Thus ignorance, arising from an erroneous estimate of obligation, cannot be deemed destitute of responsibility.

In short, experience daily corroborates the declaration of Scripture, that the produce must partake of the character of the seed. A life spent in theatres, ball rooms, and assemblies, or in wilful, and continued sins of omission or commission, cannot be a suitable preparation for a heavenly occupation of any kind. If Satan dwell in the heart, however custom, vanity, or form may bring the body into God's house, it is no wonder if the spirit be absent, and the lip have no offering to present.

Where the fear of God as a principle exists not, the 'grand plague' of this silence is custom and false pride. It is easy to mark on the one hand a slavish subserviency to a sinful fashion; and, on the other, a disdain to expend breath upon themes so utterly uninteresting, and in company so utterly offensive to a fastidious sensibility. Shall the voice, which has called forth applause from the best and most polished judges, be held so cheap, as to mingle with that of a droning clerk and screaming charity children? Or shall I draw upon me the stare of astonishment from those whose opinions I respect, and to whose habits I conform myself? Thus the hallowed nature of this occupation is held of no account compared to the restraints of society; the design is of small moment contrasted with the display; the matter must shrink in competition with the manner. Such is the practical, if not the professed, reasoning of thousands in the present day. What wonder then, if they bring it to bear upon the most solemn and sacred subjects, and seek to persuade themselves that the form of godliness is of more value than the power, despite the assertion of Scripture that, though 'man looketh upon the outward appearance, the Lord looketh upon the heart!'

It is difficult to reason with such as have no sense

of religious obligation, but, while their heart is in the world, merely throng the church from a respect to fashion or love of ostentation. So long as they are influenced by such motives, it cannot be expected that they will observe duties to which they are insensible. Yet they plume themselves upon consistency—they imagine themselves actuated by a love of honour—they would scorn to be considered devoid of common sense; while the first is outraged, the second falsified, and the third abused by thanks without thanksgiving, and duty without submission. A sacred service, not founded upon a sense of sin, and gratitude for mercy, is an abomination. Shall those then who possess not these feelings refrain their lips? We answer in the words of Peter Boehler to Wesley: 'Preach faith till you have it.'[1]—Sing your song of thanksgiving, till you feel it. If any have the least desire to be partakers of the grace of God, let them keep in the path of duty; they may thus expect the hallowed sacrifice of praise to conduce to their spiritual benefit, rather as presented by their own hands, than left to the empty exhibition of a few hired performers.

Another motive may be assigned for silence, and that of a purer kind,—a deep conviction of unworthiness. It may be simply observed, that where this wholesome feeling predominates, it will either urge to genuine repentance, or increased ungodliness. The former would put an end to wilful sin, and prepare the soul for future rapturous thanksgiving; the latter would induce the sinner to shun altogether the courts of Him who will not wink at transgression.

It were well, if the charge of neglect could be substantiated only against men of professed worldly

[1] Southey's Life of Wesley, Vol. I. p. 156.

habits; but it is too evident, that there are many in every Christian congregation, who, while they lay claim to some knowledge of a spiritual service, take no share or interest in the hallelujahs of the saints. How many need reminding that the Music of the Church is not mere exhibition—that it is no matter of indifference to God, whether we exercise our talents to His glory, or suffer them to 'rust in us unemployed.' Does the thought never pass through the minds of such 'careless almoners of Heaven's bounty,' that

> Spirits are not finely touched,
> But to fine issues?

Natural gifts, such especially as draw a line between us and the brutes, are combined with some peculiar design of blessing to ourselves, and glory to God; much more those, which enable us to magnify Him in the public assemblies of His people. And if He has bestowed upon any individual a voice of mellowed beauty, what is it but a ten talents, for which another ten will be required in the day of account?

Among those, however, who are under the influence of divine grace, and yet withhold an expressed thanksgiving, there is a class deserving of every forbearance and tenderness. I mean those 'babes in Christ,' who, surrounded by irreligious relatives, have to sustain a continued conflict between their sense of duty, and their natural affections. The dread of singularity may overpower weak spirits, and induce them to shun what appear unnecessary occasions of offence. It is certainly to the highest degree grating to the feelings, to be sensible of a duty, and yet know, that its exercise will entail with it the smile, perhaps the scorn, of those whom we love and esteem. Many youthful Christians have to meet this

severe trial. It is part of that course of great tribulation, which it has pleased God to declare that His children shall pass through, in their journey through time. No mere man of the world, however fine his feeling, can form an adequate idea of the anguish of a tender and affectionate spirit, newly brought under convictions of sin, and glowing under the first fire of the Redeemer's love, when compelled to act contrary to the wishes of those who are the nearest and dearest, and be martyred by their harsh surmises or silent contempt. Under the acuteness of such feelings, who can wonder if the youthful aspirant after a heavenly inheritance, seeks not needlessly to expose himself to unmerited and keenly-felt reproach? Now it is not pretended, that the neglect to unite with the voices of a congregation under all circumstances, is damnatory. Every kind of palliation must be admitted for a case of this extreme delicacy; but the observation may surely be hazarded, that a steady and unvaried adherence to principle, in every class of Christian duty, would be productive of its reward. If it be not a necessary adjunct to salvation, it certainly is to edification, and

> We must not stint
> Our necessary actions, in the fear
> To cope malicious censurers.

There can be no question but a decided tone would serve to enhance the graces of the oppressed individual, and go far to silence contempt in the oppressor. But 'God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.'

Another class may be so disgusted with the character of the Psalmody, as to find it difficult to lend their assistance to its performance, or even to preserve the mind calm, and the temper in equilibrium. There

is a natural distaste in a well-constituted mind to certain compositions and modes of performance, which renders them as offensive to the feelings as wormwood is to the palate. This disgust however involves no sin. The infirmity is to be regretted, but the cause of it still more so. We know that the love of God, and the perception of His presence, ought to obtuse all sense of earthly associations; but universal experience warns us, that for this consummation we must wait till perfected in heaven. No man is called upon totally to sacrifice his talents, his taste, or his feelings; or if a momentary sacrifice is demanded, he cannot expect to make it without pain. He cannot

> praise a vicious strain,
> And call it excellent.

Before this, man must have another nature, not spiritual merely, but celestial. Still for men of a refined taste there is abundant room for caution, lest that, which is in itself sinless, should become, by an uneasy and repining temper, an occasion for sin. It is well to aim at St. Paul's elevation of spirit, to permit nothing to bring us under its power. He who suffers his disgust at manner to cloud his perceptions of the preciousness of the associated truth, is so far brought under its power, and feels its injury. The best antidote, therefore, against the nauseousness of many compositions and performances, is, instead of sulkily nourishing the vexation, so to mingle with the feelings of the congregation, as to forget for the time the miserable dress which may disfigure the noblest and most exhilarating truths.

There are also those who attribute their silence to vocal incapacity, or want of natural endowment. Many gradations however exist between a good voice

and a total defect of voice ; and it may be asserted, that the number of persons who are really unable to unite in parochial singing, is comparatively small. For this purpose there are only two requisites—to produce, and to discriminate sound ; a power of utterance, which every person who can speak necessarily has, and a power of distinguishing tones, of which few persons are entirely destitute. Now these capabilities are varied almost ad infinitum. When we say that a person has a good ear, we mean that he is able to distinguish accurately the relative position and combination of sounds. This is often, though not necessarily, connected with a good musical memory, or a capability of recalling at will some melody or harmony previously impressed upon the mind. On the other hand, a person is said to have a bad ear, when he distinguishes imperfectly, and with difficulty, the modulations of a movement ; so that he perceives little difference between tunes, in their whole construction and character very dissimilar, as, for instance, between the National Anthem and the Hundredth Psalm. Such a man is said to have a bad ear for music. As he finds it difficult to discriminate tunes, so he also hesitates in determining notes ; and, though perhaps favoured with a good natural voice, fails, from this defect, to suit it to the particular tone or its concordant ones, and so hinders, rathers than assists, the general harmony. Such instances, however, are far from common ; and where they exist, arise frequently not so much from any obstinate natural infirmity, as from neglect of cultivation. Yet even under such circumstances, unless there is a total incapacity, ample encouragement for exertion is afforded by the common psalmody. The breadth of sound of a whole assembly is a sufficient guarantee to the harshest voice, that it may pour forth the overflowings of a grateful spirit, without impeding

or harassing the progress of the universal chorus. The tide of song will sweep along with it every little obstacle, and roll onward, despite such hinderances, in a full and majestic volume, to its destination.

A superior talent for the higher branches of musical attainment may indeed be uncommon; but a capacity for that degree of acquirement which enables a man to fulfil his part in the performance of plain psalmody, is a gift as general as it is liberal. In the kingdom of nature, we always find the most useful gifts, the most unlimited in their distribution—ornamental, on the other hand, proportionably rare. We might never flatter ourselves, even by the greatest labour, to mould a voice, however melodious, when joined to an obdurate ear, to display itself in orchestral performances; because when movements are intricate, and transitions abrupt, every false note becomes glaring, every failure peculiarly offensive. But in a large congregation, where many voices of different calibre unite in the utterance of one full, harmonious, and steady tune, there is ample verge and scope enough for even the coarsest voice, and most inharmonious perception.

A voice may indeed be occasionally perceived so decidedly untrue, as to manifest that the ear, of which it is a faithful ally, is too stubborn to yield to the flexible modulations of the tune. It may be heard either driving manfully through the progress of performance at all hazard, with some heavy dissonant note like the drone of a bagpipe, or anon wavering between that and some moaning interval, when a sudden indecision shoots across the mind of the unlucky vocalist. But such instances are rare, and still more rarely excite attention. Except an individual is near, he is not likely to have his nerves irritated by such a casual disturbance. The more annoying, because

more general evil, resolvable chiefly into want of practice, is the incapability, not so much to follow a plain tune through its easy windings, as to preserve without sinking the proper pitch. This is especially the case with men's voices—the greater evil, because they are generally overwhelming; and when a tune is left to the indiscriminate handling of a crowded assemblage, without the guidance of some instrument, the strongest treble is unable to save itself from being overborne by the continued and unwearied descent of the roaring bass. This evil therefore ought to be particularly guarded against. The only real effective remedy is the use of an instrument—if a violoncello, well—if an organ, better. Practice however will do much. Let a singer ever bear in mind this declination, natural to the human voice. Let him correct his ear as much as possible by exercising with some instrument as a guide,—if he can procure no nobler, a pitch-pipe will answer his purpose—and, by a little attention, he will ensure comparative success.

It is unnecessary to touch upon the many occasional excuses made on the score of ill health, or nervous depression of spirits, since it is impossible to lay down particular rules for each case. So much is certain, that one of the earliest sins of our first parents is also one of the most general among their offspring—the inclination to excuse and explain away negligent or improper conduct. If the smallest obstacle is permitted to intervene between men and the house of their God, we need not wonder that so many are found who 'hide their transgressions like Adam,' while they wait upon Him with a silent tongue.

It has been previously observed, that one main design of our church in the arrangement of her services, was to excite the interest of her members, by enabling them, however young or however mean,

personally to share in their administration. The song of praise, and the exercise of prayer, are not confined to the priesthood, but arise toward heaven from the uplifted voices of the whole assembly. The service of our churches differs in this respect widely from that of the temple at Jerusalem under the former dispensation. There the priests and other immediate servants of God, as mediatorial types, were the only organs, by which a penitent and grateful congregation might communicate their feelings to the ear of Jehovah. It was their office to uplift the song of thanksgiving —it was theirs to waive the incense of an acceptable sacrifice—they were the only accredited voice of the people. The Romish church has also manifested in some degree the same exclusive spirit in this as in more important particulars. Her music generally is of much too complex a character for public use, and she has but few hymns to relieve her choral performances. We have already seen the advantages obtained at the reformation by the encouragement given to the laity to share in the song of praise ; and the Roman Catholics have themselves admitted the general interest excited by this enlivening exercise. 'It is hardly to be imagined,' says a Romanist who was never suspected of heretical opinions, 'what pleasure the people of Roman Catholic states in Germany have in such spiritual songs, when allowed to sing them in their own language ; or the raptures which pious sentiments clothed in majestic harmony excite.'[1] Such however are but sparingly introduced into their public services. But in the protestant churches, every man, however humble his rank and endowments, has ample opportunity presented him for giving utterance to devotional feeling, without encroaching upon the

[1] Metastasio upon his Hymn to S. Julian. Memoirs, Vol. III. p. 336.

hallowed and defined duties of the Christian pastor. Each has a censer of his own, where he may kindle the flame of his affections, and mingle his incense of prayer and praise with the cloud of the united worship of the great congregation. All in a certain sense, even in this world, are 'kings and priests unto God;' with this restriction, that none may trench upon those duties for which the sacred ministry has been set apart by Christ himself, 'in whom the whole body of the Christian church fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.'[1]

If then so great privilege has been conferred upon all the members of Christ's Church, surely something more is expected of them, than mere outward attention and decency. There are parts of the service in which they are not called upon audibly to unite; then their duty is with fervour, humility, and devotion, to accompany mentally the prayer, the thanksgiving, or the sacramental administration of the appointed pastor. But if they withhold their co-operation in a portion set apart especially for them, the very design of it is lost, as well as its resemblance to the glorified adorations of angels and 'just men made perfect.'—There may be entertainment, but there is no edification—there may be exhibition of persons, but there is no communion of souls—there may be the assent of the ear, but there is no acknowledgement of the tongue—there may be indeed a spirit, but it is, if not a deaf, a dumb spirit. 'O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men. That they would exalt him also in the

[1] Eph. iv. 16.

congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.'[1]

Each individual, therefore, in a congregation has a duty to perform, as well as the direct officers of the church, not perhaps so prominent, but equally obligatory. God expects it at his hands; and those only, who from love to Him have habitually united in its exercise, can estimate the power with which it subserves that joyous elevation of spirit, which defies the influence of an 'intermeddling' world.

While, however, the main stress is deservedly laid upon the co-operation of heart, the assent of the understanding, and the utterance of the voice; it should not be forgotten, that there are other, though subordinate, duties to be observed by the general worshipper. It is requisite, not merely that every person should be, but also that he should *appear*, interested in this particular service. Hence it is incumbent upon him, when invited by the voice of the church, to follow the injunction of Nehemiah: 'Stand up, and bless the Lord your God,'[2] instead of idly reposing upon his seat. In all religious exercises, it is impossible too closely to study forms of reverential devotion; and although their real value depends almost wholly upon custom and general estimation, yet it is the duty of every person to avoid needlessly insulting the habits and associations of others. We deem kneeling, as a sign of lowliness and self-renunciation, a more solemn and suitable posture for prayer than standing—and for this we have the authority of all ages, and of all countries. We deem standing, as a sign of cheerful and ready affections, a more becoming posture for the expression of praise than sitting—and we can defend our notions by Jewish practice, as well

[1] Psalm cvii. 31, 32. [2] Neh. ix. 5.

as by the usages of most of the Christian churches. But independently of the peculiar propriety of these postures, mere custom perfectly suffices to rebuke the conduct of such members of the Church of England as sit during the sacrifice of prayer and praise. Would not the adoption of the admonition above quoted, instead of the usual invitation, 'Let us sing to the praise and glory of God,' have the double advantage, of reminding the congregation of their duty and exchanging a sentence of not even rubrical authority, for a passage from the inspired volume?

Other marks also of careless and irreverent conduct should be cautiously avoided. Nothing is more revolting to a man of right feeling, than unabashed and wanton demeanour in the church. It offends as well the worldly man by its ill breeding, as the Christian by its impiety. 'At this day,' says the author of the Broad Stone of Honour, 'when a stranger enters the church, he cannot have a more certain indication of the rank of those who assist, than the degree of reverence, attention, and even studied and ceremonious solemnity, which they evince during the service. This is one of the many instances, when high breeding and religion go hand in hand. I have been at many of the great courts of Europe, and I have generally attended divine service at their respective places of worship; and I declare with the utmost sincerity, that if the same congregations had been promiscuously assembled, without any arrangement to distinguish rank, I could have pointed out the Sovereign and his nobles, from comparing their deportment with that of the crowd, whose vulgar levity and coarseness, neither religion, nor a sense of personal dignity had corrected.'[1]

[1] Broad Stone of Honour, p. 71.

Perhaps, throughout the whole country, no consecrated places are so greatly scandalized, by the improper conduct of those who wait upon a hallowed duty, as our cathedral and collegiate churches. During the whole morning and evening service, the pacing of feet, and shutting of doors, too often occasion one continued course of interruption—persons coming and going, not entering into the choir and taking their station reverently with the congregation, but lounging in the anti-chapel, conversing and promenading during the prayers, crowding the door of the screen for the few moments while the anthem is performed, and at its conclusion, turning their backs upon the remaining petitions, and unceremoniously taking their departure. In this respect little improvement is discernible since the days of Bedford:[1] 'What noise and hurry is there at the cathedrals in time of the sermon, especially upon a public day of thanksgiving? Is it not more like a market than a church? Thus whilst the prayers are reading in the choir, perhaps three parts of the people are walking and talking together in the body of the church. Indeed the least of their business seems to be to hear a sermon, or to pray for grace, pardon, or any other blessing. A dog comes to church as well as such a Christian, and shows the same signs of devotion, namely, none at all. These are the men who cause our Mother Church to be disrespected, and sometimes reproached for their sake, by those who are of a different persuasion. Some go there for the sake of the walk, and I am sure our Church gives them no thanks for their pains. She directs us indeed when to kneel, and when to stand up, but gives us no directions when to walk. One of her homilies is very excellent to this purpose.

[1] Bedford's Abuse of Musick, pp. 263, 264.

'See whether they take heed to their feet, as they are warned of God,[1] who never cease from uncomely walking and jetting up and down, and overthwart the church, showing an evident signification of notable contempt both of God and all good men there present. And what heed they take to their tongues and speech, who do not only speak swiftly and rashly before the Lord, but also oftentimes speak filthily, covetously, and ungodlily, talking of matters scarce fit for a tavern or alehouse, in the House of the Lord, little considering that they speak before God, who dwelleth in heaven; and less regarding that[2] they must give account at the great day, for every idle word wheresoever it be spoken, much more of filthy, unclean, or wicked words spoken in the Lord's house, to the great dishonour of His Majesty, and offence of all that hear them.'[3]

Those who despise these homely remarks, may perhaps be inclined to listen to the elegant writer above quoted. 'In the royal chapel at Dresden, I have been shocked at the behaviour of the protestants, who resort there to hear the music, to see their acquaintances, to lounge away the morning in hearing and conversing, and who appear with shameless effrontery to insult the piety of their king in the very sanctuary of his temple. In England such conduct is unknown: but it must be confessed that during the intervals of service the nave or the antichapel is disgracefully profaned. I know of nothing more calculated to excite the romantic sentiments of the heart, not to speak of the more important influence of religious feeling, than the distant chant and the solemn delivery of those inimitable prayers which are offered by our Church in the evening service. Yet what is the

[1] Eccles. v. 1. [2] Matt. xii. 36.
[3] Of the right use of the Church, Part II.

practice of the persons who are within hearing of this solemnity? they are engaged in conversation and mirth, never considering what an injury they inflict upon the more acute feelings of those, who would derive from that moment the sweet serenity of religious meditation, and the dignified enjoyment of uniting public worship with the unseen devotion of the closet.'[1]

In the country, the psalmody is exposed to the intrusion of ill manners, more coarsely, if not more openly, than in the town. The habits of country people are not much improved since the time of Herbert. The clergyman has still to endure the pain caused by 'talking, sleeping, gazing, leaning, half kneeling, and other undutiful behaviour in the people.' The singing no less than the responding, is still not unfrequently 'done in a huddling or slubbering fashion, gaping, or scratching the head, or spitting.' They have need to be reminded of the nature of 'a reasonable service;'[2] 'when we speak or sing, not as parrots without reason, or offer up such sacrifices as they did of old, which was of beasts devoid of reason, but when we use our reason, and apply our powers to the service of him that gives them.'[3]

It is, moreover, becoming, that the union of voices should be accompanied with an appearance, not merely of reverence, but of energy and liveliness. Many persons, not wholly uninterested, are yet apt to display symptoms indicative of absence of mind; singing, but with languor and sluggishness, accompanying some portion of a verse, and then dropping the voice, and again, as if moved by some sudden impulse, catching up the end of a word, and so advancing with the general chorus. It is not indeed pretended, that the

[1] Broad Stone of Honour, p. 146 note. [2] Rom. xii.
[3] Herbert's Country Parson. The Parson Praying.

state of mind is at all times equal,—that the spirits ever flow in an even tenor,—or that the voice is always in favourable tune. Man is too uncertain a being to expect, that in all cases the mode of to-day's thanksgiving must be the echo of that of yesterday. But one especial design of the psalmody is to dispel languor; and if its full benefit be sought, we must rise superior to those petty obstacles to which all are subject, and quicken our affections by an active co-operation. Let all enter into the spirit of the service, not as a task, but as the joyous expression of a cordial affection, exercising their various talents in simplicity and godly sincerity 'as unto God, and not unto men.' Thus will it never become a burdensome duty, but carry with it palpably its own reward. Once aroused, the offering in most cases calls for no exercise of self-denial. It is merely directing a natural impulse to its most proper application. It is opening a floodgate, through which the overflowings of a rapturous adoration may pour themselves, a river of waters, into the ocean of the divine love.

But if we are required not to bring into the sanctuary 'the lame or the sick'—'that which costs us nothing'—we ought surely to deem it incumbent upon us, so to prepare for the performance of this duty, as to render it acceptable unto God, and edifying unto men. If music were merely a secular gratification, it might be left to the natural bias of different individuals, to pursue or neglect it, as suited with their convenience. But since it forms a portion of a sacred service, the duty of preparation must be as universal as the import of the scriptural injunction. This consideration renders the apathy and self-satisfaction, evidenced even by religious persons in the contemplation of their ignorance of this sacred art, perfectly unaccountable. Scripture commands, and the Church

seconds the command to swell the general thanksgiving. They smile, and are dumb: or they attempt to unite, with a conviction of infirmity, powerful enough to make them uncomfortable in the act of praise, but not powerful enough to excite them to bold and energetic preparation. The conscientious pastor spends many a painful hour in the composition of his sermon; and, independent of other considerations, he feels a sense of duty, and of the sanctity of the employment, sufficiently constraining to make him tremble to appear before God, with an offering unfed by study, and unhallowed by prayer. Why do not the same motives operate in the minds of all Christians respecting the Psalmody? It is no less the duty of the people to praise, than the minister to preach; and there is no manner of reason, why previous labour should be demanded in the one case, and dispensed with in the other. The degree of our particular preparation must however vary according to the character of the required service. In this respect, the congregation have much the advantage of the clergyman, and their neglect therefore is the less excusable. The demand upon their time, patience, and exertion is but slight. The mere exercise of the voice requires no systematic study of the science, but just so much musical perception as to understand the progress of a simple melody, and so much musical memory as shall enable an individual to carry to his home the tune, which has been riveted upon his attention at church. In almost all cases, available opportunities for practice will present themselves during the week. How often do we not hear the 'singing blythe' of some person engaged in his daily occupation! And how much better were it, if the common mechanic or day-labourer, instead of trolling forth ditties of drunkenness and impurity, sought to alleviate his toil by the songs

of Zion, which would not merely serve to while away the time, but be the means of present edification, as well as a preparatory exercise for the sabbath services.

If, moreover, an individual has opportunity, the labour spent in mastering the common rudiments of the art, and acquiring a knowledge of some musical instrument would not be lost. His preparation were thus the more complete : and he would the less feel himself a stranger in the hallowed work of praise.

If a master of a family has peculiar advantages, he lies also under peculiar obligations to encourage sacred music among the members of his household. He has to contemplate not merely his own fitness, but that of his servants and children. No mode is better adapted to convey correct ideas than the example of superiors. In this, as in other respects, 'example is better than precept;' though the highest excellence is the union of both. Their duty should be thus especially impressed upon the minds of the young. If the voice of melody is at any time peculiarly pleasing, it is when it proceeds from the lips of children. This approbation springs not so much from the sweetness and mellowness of the youthful voice, as from the guilelessness and simplicity of the youthful character. We feel that the expression of the lip is at least not belied by the feelings of the heart; and hence the vocal tribute of a child commends itself at once to the affections, when the more powerful and elaborate effusions of the talent of a man, are often unable to obliterate our knowledge of the iniquity of his character. The parent, therefore, who cultivates, for spiritual purposes, the vocal talents of his children, undertakes a task as pleasing as it is beneficial. Whereas a contrary conduct renders him guilty of a twofold offence against a plain

duty, neglecting it in his own person, and propagating the same neglect in the persons of his inferiors. Nor are the evils of such negligence to be despised. We believe that our children, naturally the subjects of Satan, have an intuitive contempt of God, and distaste for his ways. They have an inborn irreverence for His service, kept in check indeed by habitual restraints, but ever ready to manifest itself, whenever an opportunity is afforded by the impiety or carelessness of their superiors. Unless, therefore, there be a strong natural taste for music, the Psalmody of the Church, if despised by the parent, will be ridiculed by the child; and thus, taught by example to pour contempt upon a prominent part of divine worship, he will soon learn to reject the whole, and grow up to the stature of a man, 'without God, and without hope in the world.'

Now a well-regulated family presents peculiar facilities for choral practice in the morning and evening social service. On such occasions, the cottage, no less than the palace, becomes a house of God; and the nearer the affinity between the mode of public and that of private worship, the more will interest be excited in the youthful mind for the services of the great congregation. In fact, family worship should be a species of epitome of the Sabbath ministrations. There should be the offering of prayer, the reading of the word, and the song of praise. It is to be regretted that in many, perhaps in most religious families, the latter is altogether omitted. The merest excuse is sufficient to put aside this sacred exercise. There is no instrument—or the voices are partial and untunable—or there is no one to take the lead. Certain however it is, that nothing so greatly enlivens family devotion as sacred music. It has a soothing influence to wean the mind from

those earthly cares which are the 'burthen of the week;' it relieves weariness, it raises the affections, and is thus an admirable preparative to the solemn exercises that succeed. Even if no other opportunity be afforded, it will serve sufficiently to habituate the dependents and junior members of a family to the exercise of the voice on all occasions of religious worship. It is the observation of Philip Henry: 'Those do well that pray morning and evening in their families: those do better, that pray and read the scriptures: but those do best of all that pray, and read, and sing psalms: and Christians should covet earnestly the best gifts.'[1]

We should remember, however, on all occasions, the great design of this sacred employment, the glory of God, and edification of man. He who is so excited by the beauty of the harmony, as to be unmindful of the words which he sings, renders a lame and unacceptable sacrifice. A devoted spirit is as much required in the act of praise as of prayer; and it therefore becomes us, to curb our affections with a godly jealousy, and thus keep the music in strict subserviency to the words of the psalm or anthem.

> Non vox, sed votum, non Musica chordula, sed cor;
> Non clamans, sed amans, psallit in aure Dei.[2]

In the same spirit should instrumental music be employed for devotional purposes. The voice of an instrument derives its character of good or evil, solely from the design of the composition, and the use to

[1] Wordsworth's Eccl. Biog. Vol. VI. p. 201. 'Who is he, bearing the sense of a man, which is not ashamed to end the day without singing of Psalms, seeing even the little birdes, with solemn devotion and sweet notes, do both begin and ende the daie.'—Ambrose in his Hexameron, V. 12, quoted by the Author of the 'Praise of Musicke.' 1586.

[2] 'Tis not the voice but vow,
Sound heart, not sounding string,
True zeal, not outward show,
That in God's ear doth ring.'—*Abuse of Musick*, p. 253.

which it is applied. As an aid to devotional feeling, instrumental music cannot be too highly recommended. It was made rich use of by the psalmist, who pronounces it 'a comely and pleasant thing,' [1]—who proposes the example of others for imitation [2]—who exhorts, [3] and even commands its use, [4]—who declares his own determination, [5]—and arouses himself to the exercise. [6]

If however we would imitate the example, and obey the injunction of the psalmist, we must seek to imbibe his spirit. 'In a divine service there is no harmony, unless the heart do accompany every part of the performance; and if that instrument be not used, or out of tune, men sing to themselves, and not to God.' 'To come to church without any intention to worship God in his own house, in every part of the service, or pretend to worship him without devotion, are great affronts to the divine majesty. It is a contempt of religion and of the house of God, to come only to please our ears, to hear better voices, more curious compositions, and more artful singing, than can be met with (especially gratis) in any other place. We ought all to beware, that the music doth not employ our fancy more than our affections. To this end our minds ought to be in the first place fixed and intent upon the praises of God, which are expressed in the Hymn or Anthem. If our principal attention is to the words, they, when conveyed to us in musical sonnets, will give life and quickness to our devotions. But if our principal attention is to the music, the sounds alone will prove empty, and most probably leave the devotion of the anthem between them.' [7]

[1] Ps. xxxiii. 1. [2] Ps. lxviii. 24, 25.
[3] Ps. lxviii. 26: xxxiii. 1, 2, 3: lxxxi. 1—4.
[4] Ps. xcviii. 4—6: cxlvii. 7: cxlix. 1—3: cl. 3—6.
[5] Ps. xliii. 4: lxxi. 22, 23: cxliv. 9.
[6] Ps. lvii. 7—11: cviii. 1—5. [7] Abuse of Musick, pp. 253, 262.

Nothing so powerfully subserves the communion of saints, as a hearty concurrence of lip and soul in congregational thanksgiving. Of all enjoyments, music is the least selfish. It is social alike in its nature and effects. A single musical sound, as has been already observed, is itself formed of certain component parts, and requires the concordance of these parts to produce it. Thus melody is in effect the union of successive harmonies. Again, melody obtains its character, not from the beauty and brilliancy of any solitary sound, but from the general effect produced by the different notes, in their relation to each other. Nay, so greatly does music delight in multiplied associations, that the most perfect is that, which brings the greatest number of rich and concordant sounds into one golden combination. Single tones, however pleasing, soon pall upon the taste; while the harmony of many voices, and many instruments, carrying onward its chords linked together in a treble chain, alike fixes and invigorates the spirit. If we then consider the harmonies which form each simple note, weigh in the same estimate the several and successive chords, and count on the thousands that crowd to fill up a flowing chorus, we may well acknowledge how proud music is of society and friendly intercourse.

Music indeed presents so perfect an emblem of union, that some have considered the three concords united in one, as the truest symbol of the Trinity in Unity. 'Nay,' says Bedford, 'I may venture to add that perhaps there is not a greater resemblance of God, as he is a spiritual substance, and enters into the very heart and soul, filling it with delight and satisfaction, than music is.'[1]

But music is an emblem of a peculiar character, for

[1] Abuse of Musick, p. 257.

Three solemn parts together twine,
In harmony's mysterious line;

it serves to produce the very effect of which it is the emblem. We know that nothing so soon begets kindness and love, as an union of interests, especially in moments of peril. The soldier, on the eve of battle, feels his affections for his comrades redoubled, from the consideration, that they are united in the same service. The sense of union strengthens their friendship, and the communication of their feelings deepens the impression. Just so Christians, engaged in the same spiritual conflicts, feel a love, springing from this single consideration, totally distinct from their mere affections as men. They are in peril—a battle is to be fought—and they feel a love indescribable to those who bear with them the heat and burden of the day. They delight to interchange words of comfort and of affection,—and when music, powerful to enliven and sustain the feelings, enables them to unite in one glowing effusion, it is ' as the sound of many waters, and as the sound of mighty thunderings.' The same love to the Redeemer, the same ardour of high hope, the same thirst after divine glory, the same energy of brotherly affection, vibrate throughout their breasts to the same instinctive touch. And thus it is when music unites the voices of the Lord's people, that their hearts are also knit together as the hearts of David and Jonathan, and they love each other as their own souls.[1]

Nor do the advantages which result from this exercise stay here. It soothes the troubled spirit. It animates the forlorn. It directs the thoughts, and controls their wanderings. It kindles the smoul-

> Three solemn aisles approach the shrine,
> Yet all are one—together all
> In thoughts that awe but not appal,
> Teach the adoring heart to fall.
>
> *The Christian Year, Trinity Sunday.*

[1] 1 Sam. xx. 17.

dering affections. It wraps the senses in a mantle of spiritual enchantment. It applies strength to the chord of divine rapture in the soul of the believer, by which it may retain its tension without yielding or weariness. It was no slight spiritual energy that urged David, as he seized his forgotten harp, to commence with a bold sweep of rapturous exultation. 'O praise the Lord, for it is a good thing to sing mercies unto our God: yea, a joyful and pleasant thing it is to be thankful.' Let those therefore who would devote all their talents to the service of the Redeemer, and reap all the benefit to be derived from their exercise, imitate his example. He who neglects or trifles with the psalmody of the house of God, need not wonder if his affections become dry and sluggish, when the chief instrument of their elevation is accounted a mere tool of convenience, or amusement for the vulgar. Such may indeed be earnestly intent upon the fulfilment of religious and conscientious duty, and 'they shall not lose their reward;' but they needlessly rob themselves of much spiritual enjoyment. They act too rigidly with their souls, which in heaviness demand excitement, in anxiety, repose. By their own negligence they incapacitate themselves from joining in the only mode of expressing the highest state of spiritual exultation. And thus when called upon by the voice of the people, the voice of the church, and the voice of God, the lip refuses its office, the heart burns away its ardour, and the tongue has no tribute to present except inarticulate murmurs, in a theme so endeared to it, as a Saviour's glory and a Saviour's love. 'O the wise conceit of that heavenly teacher, which hath by his skill found out a way, that doing those things wherein we delight, we may also learn that whereby we profit.'[1]

[1] St. Basil, quoted in Hooker's Eccl. Polity, Book V. § 38.

VI.

THE PSALMODY.

A pause ensues.
The organ breathes its distant thunder notes,
Then swells into a diapason full:
The people rising, sing, *with harp, with harp,*
And voice of psalms: harmoniously attuned,
The various voices blend: the long drawn aisles,
At every close, the lingering strains prolong.

GRAHAME.

NOTHING more forcibly evinces the anxiety of the Church, to meet the exigencies of her sons in every stage of their spiritual growth, than the provisions of her services. There is confession of sin for the penitent, and the song of thanksgiving for those that are joyful in heart. There is 'admonition, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness; line upon line, and precept upon precept, to perfect the man of God in every good word and work.'

Now there are times, when the soul is so filled with the divine consolations, that, to use the comparison of Scripture, it is 'as wine which has no vent, it is ready to burst like new bottles.'[1] The heart feels the mercies of God, 'breaking forth like mighty waters on every side.' The affections crowd so rapturously upon the thoughts, that the flesh bows beneath the energy of the spirit, and the lip, quivering in its unexpressed exultation, refuses, because it is unable, to speak the praises of its Maker.

[1] Job xxxii. 19.

As such seasons have their peculiar enjoyment, so also should they have their peculiar expression. The ordinary channels of utterance are inadequate,—the soul seeks for one calculated, not to straiten and impede, but to humour and yet calm her raptures. For this purpose music presents itself.

Now the church assumes, in the spirit of charity, that her sons so live and grow in the divine graces, that such seasons are not ‘ few and far between,’ but of frequent occurrence. She assumes also, that if ever their souls are thus excited, it is upon the day of rest, when, ascending with the multitude that keep holy day, they are especially admonished ‘ to rejoice and be glad.’ In the arrangement of her public services, therefore, she does not deem herself called upon to provide for the dryness and deadness of those, who make no effort to cherish their graces. Much less does she claim the anomalous character of being a body of unbelievers. She has never heard of a Church of infidels, a Christian assembly of unjust men. She sees absurdity upon the very front of such an assumption, and holds forth the consistency of her character to all those, who disapprove of the spirituality of her liturgical expressions. Her invitation to the duties of her common worship, respects neither the man of unabashed transgression, nor the man of mere outward decency. The door is not indeed shut against them, but the Church has provided no service suited to their case. The sinner is invited to confess his sin, and beseech for mercy. The promises of the Scripture are unfolded to him. He is led to acknowledge his dependence on the merits of the Saviour, and his determination to renounce the service of Satan. And thus while the Church mourns over the fact, that tares, despite every endeavour upon her part, will creep in among the wheat, she feels it no

portion of her duty to descend from her pure elevation to legalize iniquity, and set her seal of approbation upon the forehead of sin.

Yet though no provision is made for the wilful and determined sinner, she forgets not the meanest of her children, from the conscience-struck penitent, to 'the strong man in Christ Jesus,' but enables each to find his allotted portion in her beautiful services. Thus throughout her collects and prayers, are interspersed ejaculatory petitions, that all may utter aloud the sentiments of a devotional spirit; while the psalmody is reserved for the expression of the loftiest and most intense adoration. Had she been preparing a service in which unbelievers could with propriety have engaged, music had been better omitted; for how could such consistently unite in an exercise of praise? But confining her maternal embrace 'to the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus,' she supposed their hearts to be so warmed by divine love, as to be longing for some expression of that warmth, yet more animating than the mere utterance of the voice; and for this she provided in the psalm.

Here the soul floats and reposes upon the stream of its affections. The harmony of sound chastens while it sustains, and mellows while it heightens the fervour of devotion. And when thus the rapture of the spirit has been borne upon the uplifted Hallelujahs of an assembled multitude toward heaven, it gradually subsides into a settled, pure, and angelic 'peace, that passeth all understanding.'

> —far away and high above
> In maze on maze the tranced sight
> Strays, mindful of that heavenly love,
> Which knows no end in depth or height,
> While the strong breath of music seems,
> To waft us ever on, soaring in blissful dreams.
>
> *The Christian Year*. p. 61.

This was one grand design of congregational music. But what are the materials with which it works? What is the character of the poetry which gives utterance to the thought, and of the harmony which condenses and gives play to the feeling? There should certainly be some analogy between them. Lofty ecstacies should not be made to spend themselves upon unintelligible jargon, or ill-sorted combinations of vociferous sounds. The costume should accord with the character; and it is just as revolting to good feeling to clothe a solemn elevation of spirit in sentimental verbiage, and theatrical trillos, as to attire a clergyman in a harlequin's dress, with a jester's cap and bells.

The compositions which, when applied to music, subserve this high devotion, are of two kinds—inspired psalms versified, and uninspired hymns. Of the former, two versions, termed the Old and the New, have been in common use throughout our churches. The distinct character of these works has been so often discussed, that it is needless to do more than allude to them. The Old Version by Sternhold and Hopkins, is now generally admitted to be beneath criticism, in a literary point of view; with the exception of a few strong and healthy shoots springing up amid the wilderness. That it should have so long and stubbornly maintained its hold on the public ear, if not on the public estimation, forms a singular anomaly in the past and present age, to be only accounted for, by the general indifference to the psalmodial portion of our church services, or by the tenacity with which large bodies, ecclesiastical as well as political, cling to the very refuse of custom. While the most powerful and polished writers were enriching the public taste, by multiplied samples of the capaciousness and beauty of our language, for all the

purposes of poetry, we could consent to suffer the 'high praises of God,' conveyed to us in the majesty and truth of inspired ideas, to be doled out to the assembled congregation in doggrel, as puerile as any that has ever issued from the British press. If, however, the rusticity of its style be overlooked, the Old Version holds a very respectable rank as a translation. The assumption in its title page, that it was 'conferred with the Hebrew,' was no idle vaunt; and we have the testimony of competent judges, to the great care with which it was undertaken, and the general fidelity of its execution. 'Several well skilled in the Hebrew tongue, in our age,' says a defender of the old singing psalms, 'have observed this translation to agree so exactly with the Hebrew text, that they could not but wonder, how Thomas Sternhold, John Hopkins, and such others, could make it.'[1] Still, it is contended that this faithful adherence to the original, is but 'the resemblance which the dead bear to the living,' and by no means possesses sufficient merit to atone for the extreme ruggedness of its style.[2] The secondary design of this version, as set forth in its title, was indeed highly commendable, and might in the rude age in which it was composed, be partially attained. Yet, however the arm of authority may have upheld its public use, it is to be feared, that 'in private houses,' it has long ceased to conduce to 'the godly solace and comfort' of believers, or to supersede those 'ungodly songs and ballads which tend only to the nourishing of vice, and corrupting of youth.'[3] Still we have reason to believe, that it did answer this design in an earlier age. Bishop Beveridge, speaking of those 'who have been accustomed to sing these old psalms in their churches every Lord's day,' says, that 'they

[1] Beveridge's Defence of the Old Singing Psalms, p. 35.
[2] Preface to Christian Psalmist. [3] Title page of Sternhold's Psalms.

have found such extraordinary benefit and comfort from that most excellent and heavenly spirit of piety and devotion that runs through them, and moves upon their souls, in the due use of them, that they have got many of them by heart, and are able to repeat, and sing them by themselves, in their own houses or closets, or wheresoever they are ; and whensoever they have a mind, as all good people often have, to be cheerful and merry, then these psalms come into their minds, and fill them with unspeakable joy and thankfulness to God, and with reverence and fear of his holy name ; so that whatsoever their condition is, they find something here that suits it, as exactly as if it was designed for it. They also that cannot read, by the frequent use of these plain psalms, can say many of them by heart, and call them to remembrance upon all occasions, and exercise their faith, and fear, and trust in God in the repetition of them. Upon which and many such accounts, our common people, which, as they are the far greatest part of the nation, so they afford the greatest number of sincere Christians, they have such a value and fondness for these old psalms, that they would not part with them for the world.' [1]

Still, even at an early period, this version was considered unsatisfactory by well-informed minds ; and we find Bishop Taylor in allusion to the Psalms, expressing his wish, 'that they were made as fit to sing by their numbers, as they are by their weight.' [2] Slow and cautious, however, were the attempts to improve ; and it was not till nearly a century and a half had passed away, that another version was risked, better according in smoothness of diction with the more refined taste of the day. Unhappily it

[1] Beveridge's Defence, pp. 94—96.
[2] Sermon on Sir George Dalston. Taylor's Works. Vol. VI. p. 567.

accorded also with the taste of the day in a more important and material point. It rejected the peculiar Christian character of the former version, shunned, as much as might be, the marked allusions to the Messiah, and thus framed a book of Psalms, capable of being chanted as well by the Jew, as the Christian—the Socinian, as the believer in the Godhead of the Saviour. The translators displayed nothing of the extreme anxiety of the old versifiers, to give a faithful and rigidly exact copy of the original. No pretence was ever made that it was conferred with the Hebrew, 'nor so much as that any of our Bishops or other men learned in that language were appointed or authorized to do it.'[1] Hence, as might be supposed, it was looked upon with an eye of jealousy by many men of judgment and piety; one of whom took the pains to collate it with the new translation in prose. 'Which I had no sooner begun, but I found so many variations, that I thought to have gathered together all that I judged to be so. But when I had gone a little way, I found them multiply so fast upon me, that I could see no end, and was therefore forced to give it over.'[2] He however charitably assigns, as a reason for these variations, that, 'though the authors doubtless designed a true translation, yet other things crowding into their heads at the same time, justled that design so, that it could not always take effect.'[3] Thus the most competent judges have conceived, that the advantages of the new version are balanced by vapidity, a general want of spiritual fervour, a narrowness of interpretation, and an occasional inaccuracy, whether designed or not, calculated to mislead upon some of the most important points of doctrine. Bishop Horsley prefers

[1] Beveridge's Defence, p. 39. [2] Ib. p. 40. [3] Ib. 41.

to the new, the old version, which he characterizes 'as expressed in such terms as, like the original, point clearly to the spiritual meaning.' The adoption of the new version he deems a change much for the worse.[1]

Between these two unsatisfactory versions, however, the clergyman was for a length of time obliged to make his choice. If he stumbled at the gross verbal absurdities which met his eye on every page of the old version, he was referred to the neatness and elegance of the new. If he objected to the cold, formal, and inaccurate character of the new, he was sent back to the old. So that the psalmody of his church was a sort of continued contest between taste versus doctrine, formality versus propriety. If he ventured to introduce a few hymns, he was at once denounced methodistical, his character as a true son of the church was questioned, he had a notification from his bishop of disapprobation, he was charged with a breach of ecclesiastical discipline, and all this backed by a hint of the possible construction of the offence into a contempt for the royal authority, which, it was asserted, had enjoined the commonly received versions. And thus the terrified pastor, finding that his simple-minded attempt to improve his psalmody not only brought him under the censure of his superiors, but made him amenable to the laws of the land, as a traitor to his king, in many cases hastily dismissed the seditious volume, and recalled his people to the barbarisms or doctrinal inaccuracies of their former Psalm book. Not that this left him entirely destitute of congregational singing. From either version many psalms may be selected, admirably calculated to sustain a devotional spirit. The new affords some, as correct in interpretation, as elegant in execution—

[1] Preface to the York selection of Hymns.

while the old possesses a few, whose homeliness of expression rather enhances, than detracts from, the air of genuine and manly simplicity, which they assume. But still he was cramped: and instead of fully displaying in every part of the service, the richness of the 'truth as it is in Jesus,' he could only present it to his people, through the medium of predictions, which had long been fulfilled. Hence the spirit of the exercise was in a great measure deadened. It subserved indeed edification, but not all the edification of which it was capable.

The inadequacy of even the best version of the Psalms, or any passage of the Old Testament, fully to convey the feelings of a soul, disciplined by the Holy Spirit under the present dispensation, has been frequently shewn. Our own church has tacitly admitted it, by introducing into her services hymns, of human composition indeed, but written in the style and spirit of biblical poetry, and in agreement with the great truths of the Christian faith. Such, for instance, are the Te Deum and the Trisagion. The superior advantages which we possess over the children of Israel, are generally understood to consist in a clearer insight into the scheme of redemption, a fuller revelation of Old Testament truths, and a more manifest redemption of Old Testament promises. If so, it cannot be conceived, that when the heart is remodeled after the image of Christ, the tongue is still to have the curb of the law; and that, when the understanding is enriched with all 'the treasures of wisdom and knowledge' which are contained in the gospel, it should fix itself exclusively in any one of the grand divisions of its services, upon the obscure intimations of events then future, but now long past, which occur in the writings of those, who saw but 'through a glass darkly' that Messiah, whom we are

permitted 'to see face to face.' Thus Hooker discriminates between the Psalms of the old, and the hymns of the new dispensation. 'These are songs,' says he, speaking of the Magnificat, Benedictus, and Nunc Dimittis, 'which concern us so much more than the songs of David, as the Gospel touches us more than the Law, the New Testament than the Old; being discoveries of Christ already present, whose future coming the other Psalms did but fore-signify. They are sacred hymns which Christianity hath peculiar to itself. The others being songs too of praise and thanksgiving; but songs wherewith as *we* serve God, so the *Jew* likewise.'[1]

As a matter of choice, therefore, there can be little question between the exclusive use of metrical Psalms, and the adoption of compositions of a more enlarged and comprehensive New Testament character. But 'the royal authority' has been the great bugbear to terrify the clergy into the use of the two versions. It presents on all occasions an unanswerable argument. 'I wish to have an interchange of Psalms and Hymns in my church.' 'But, the king's command!' 'Yet the present versions are so barbarous or listless, that I can hope for no improvement in my psalmody so long as they are exclusively persisted in.' 'But the royal injunction!' 'They are defective in the Gospel scheme.' 'What! do you contemn the king's authority?'

This has, in many instances, answered its design of intimidation; till some, partaking of the freedom of opinion that marks the age, have ventured to touch this mighty bulwark against all improvement of the psalmody, and with the touch it has shivered like glass. The truth is at length discovered, that no such

[1] Ecclesiastical Polity, Bk. V. § 40.

authority has been given, or attempted to be given by any of our kings to any of our versions. An allowance has been indeed granted for the old and new version to be printed and used, but no command—an allowance which was formally given to books of the most opposite talent, and most opposite tendency. Both the old and new versions claim in the title page the privilege of being allowed to be sung—the new, expressly subject to the option of individual churches, whether 'they shall think fit to receive the same.' 'Here,' says Beveridge, speaking of the new, and his remarks apply generally to the old, 'is no command or injunction, nor the least intimation of his majesty's pleasure that it should be any where received, but rather that all should consider (as I and others have done) whether it be fit to be received or not, and then to receive it or not receive it, according as they do or do not think fit.' [1] Thus whatever arguments may be used, or authority exercised, to enforce in particular instances the use of either version, the clergyman who attempts to reform his psalmody may rest satisfied, that he is guiltless of the crime of sedition; and that whosesoever opinions and prejudices he may offend, he offends not against the mandate of his king. The asserted injunction merges into a species of royal *imprimatur*, happily for the cause of sound sense and sound language, as well as sound religion. Sternhold's Psalms, had they been enforced in their original ruggedness and unmitigated barbarism, could not have been endured in the present day. In proof of which, there is not a parish throughout the country, even where the view of this subject is the most narrow and bigoted, where the version is admitted as it originally sprung fresh from the pens of the laborious

[1] Beveridge's Defence, p. 106.

versifiers. The older editions have undergone so many alterations and corrections, that there is a wide difference between the present and that which gained the approving seal of our sixth Edward.

The remarks thus offered respecting the old and new versions, cannot reasonably be construed into a general disrespect for the introduction of metrical Psalms into our worship. The Psalms of David, abounding as they do in encouragement, counsel, and instruction, suited to every state of Christian experience, and presenting the noblest specimens of praise and thanksgiving, must, even when they appear in an uncouth exterior, be at all times welcome to the soul of the believer. Many of them are well adapted for public worship, and all of them afford ample matter for private meditation. Hence our Church has, by authority, introduced portions of them into her morning and evening services, to be chanted antiphonally by her choristers and people. And, were it necessary to press the argument, this very fact might be considered to afford presumptive proof, that she did not originally contemplate the repetition of the Psalms in a metrical form during the course of the service; but intended 'the anthem,' which she enjoins 'to follow' the morning and evening collects, to be taken from some other part of the inspired volume, or suitable hymn of human composition. However that might be, no one could object, unless under the influence of strong prejudice, to the occasional introduction of a metrical Psalm; provided there be nothing in its rhythmical form to depreciate the sentiment by low and ludicrous, or cold and inaccurate translation. A version of that rich treasury of evangelical truth, combining energy with fidelity, elegance with spiritual unction, is yet, and perhaps will ever remain, a desideratum. The

talent that has been unsatisfactorily expended upon the task, from the mighty Milton to our own Montgomery, —not to speak of the royal diversion of our Scottish James, and the episcopal labours of Dr. Mant,— seems to warn all others to coast along the shore of their own powers, and not tempt a sea of sunken rocks.

The exclusive use of the old version, and the ill success which has attended more modern experiments, have served to rivet the prejudices of some, overweenedly attached to cathedral music, against psalmody in every form. Thus Wharton reprobated any version of the Psalms, especially if intended for the use of the Church; and Dr. Johnson went a step further, and with his customary dogmatism, depreciated all devotional poetry whatsoever. Mason attributes this prejudice to an outrageous zeal against every thing deemed puritanical; and evidences its absurdity, whether it applies to *metrical*—metre having prevailed long prior to the Reformation, and therefore no innovation of the sectarians, or *psalmody*—select Psalms having been used in the Church from a remote antiquity.[1]

Among the many versions that are now before the public, a selection might be formed of sufficient accuracy and beauty to sustain with dignity our congregational singing. As some psalms are better suited than others to the circumstances of a Christian congregation, the propriety of such selection is admitted, even by those who confine themselves rigidly to one version. It is not however necessary to draw a line through all, which would come under the sweeping and audacious language of Mason, as 'referring either to Jewish ceremonies, or abounding in

[1] Mason's Essays, III.

Jewish imprecations.'[1] But before the design of this portion of the service can be fully attained, it is highly necessary, for the reasons above stated, to conjoin with the Psalms, either human compositions, or versifications of some portion of the New Testament.

To the former, it may be fearlessly asserted, no reasonable general objection can be made, however particular hymns may justly excite prejudice. The specious hesitation manifested by some to admit such poetical pieces, because they are not inspired, might apply with almost equal propriety to the proclamation of the gospel; which, if it be inspired in its institution, is certainly not in its execution. If it be argued that the one is a direct appointment—so is the other; unless 'Admonish one another in psalms, *and hymns, and spiritual songs*,'[2] be frittered away, as words without meaning—commands without obligation. As to the particular character of both, there is no injunction that either the hymns or sermon shall be in the very words of scripture. In fact, from the earliest ages of the Church, hymns of human composition have been in constant use in public services. Examples might be multiplied to show, that the idle objections of the present century upon this head, have at least the boast of singularity. Not only is there an express distinction made by the fathers between psalms and hymns; but we learn that, while the psalms of David were chanted by the whole congregation, hymns were reserved for those who were admitted to the holy sacramental mysteries. And thus 'hymns followed after psalms, as something more perfect.'[3] The Church of England, on whose behoof these fastidious

[1] Mason's Essays on Church Music, III.
[2] Ephes. v. 19. Col. iii. 16.
[3] Preface to the York Selection of Hymns.

objectors array themselves, has herself unequivocally declared her approbation of uninspired compositions of a Christian character. In her authorized formularies are introduced hymns, which had been chanted 'a thousand years before that intrusion of the old and new versions, which silenced the legitimate music of the church.'[1] Moreover, by a reference to almost all editions of the Book of Common Prayer, it is plain that the adoption of Psalms was not designed to exclude hymns even of a metrical form. Both the old and new version have, as an appendix, versifications of passages from the New Testament, and hymns for particular occasions; among which one of the most beautiful was composed by a dissenter.[2] In the present day we find names of the highest authority prefixed to collections of Psalms and Hymns; the late King and many of our most eminent Bishops having honoured such compilations with their patronage. So that it were well for those who are inclined to pass sweeping censures upon uninspired hymns, to pause before they anathematize compositions authorized by the practice of the earliest ages of the Christian church, and admitted by many of the most distinguished characters in our own age and country, for erudition, rank, and piety.

It remains for us to consider the most prominent causes which have served, with any shadow of reason, to foster a prejudice against the introduction of hymns into the services of the Church. It must be allowed, that very many of the evils which justly excite complaint, spring from the liberty assumed by the parochial clergy, and denied them neither by royal authority nor the ecclesiastical canons, to introduce, with the sole consent of the people, whatever compositions

[1] Preface to the York Selection of Hymns.
[2] Sacramental Hymn, Doddridge.

they may deem best subservient to the spiritual interests of their particular charge. It cannot be expected, that among twenty thousand clergymen, there should be an uniformity of correct taste and feeling. Even piety, although it always humanizes and softens the mind, does not necessarily improve the taste. Hence in examining the various collections of Psalms and Hymns, which are used in different churches, no well-regulated mind can avoid lamenting the want of some judicious, spiritual, approved, and standard Psalm-book, which might universally obtain among the several flocks, who are, in almost every other respect, 'gathered into one fold under one Shepherd.' For want of this, not only are churches exposed to compositions totally out of character with the chaste and reverential language of the liturgy; but the bond of union, which it is the design of the Church to strengthen, is often loosened in one important particular. If a churchman, in his journey through the country, steps, on the Sabbath day, into the place appointed by his Church for the ceremonials of her worship, he is sure to find himself at home in every part of the service except the psalmody: there indeed he may feel himself a stranger. He is invited to join the congregation in a song of praise. He stands up with alacrity and reverence. A hymn is given out. He turns over the leaves of his prayer-book, that his understanding may accompany his voice, and his voice the congregation. But there he finds it not; and as no one may have sufficient courtesy to hand him a book, he must depend upon the assistance of the clerk. The plan of breaking a verse into lines is unquestionably an unhappy one; but the very evil complained of obliges it to be adopted. Still the indistinct and unintelligible manner in which the words are too frequently mumbled,

does not greatly facilitate the meaning. Part may be comprehended, part guessed at, and part lost. This is the more probable, where the clergyman, sacrificing the limited powers of his people to the connexion of the poetry or melody, requires the whole verse, sometimes of eight lines, to be read at once. Few can tax their memories to retain it. The stranger collects perhaps a confused idea, which enables him to conjecture the subject of the hymn, but not to follow it with a perfect understanding. Unwilling however to appear uninterested, he sings what words he has apprehended; and for the rest, takes a lesson from the lips of the people around him, and so endeavours to imitate whatever liquid, sibilant, or guttural sounds may seem to be in present use.[1]

Yet, however desirable a standard Psalm-book, the diversity of sentiment which unfortunately prevails

[1] The practice of splitting verses into parts by giving out lines of hymns, is not the less unfortunate that it is in many cases necessary. It involves frequently a sacrifice both of the interests of the tune, and the meaning of the verse. Not only is it seldom that two lines contain an entire sentiment, but sometimes the third line is absolutely necessary to complete the sense, as in a well-known hymn of Cowper's:

When comforts are declining
He grants the soul again—
A season of clear shining,
To cheer it after rain.

Hence Philip Henry adopted a better method in his family worship. 'The psalm was sung without reading the line betwixt (every one in the family having a book) which he preferred much before the common way of singing, where it might conveniently be done, as more agreeable to the practice of the primitive church, and the reformed churches abroad; and by this means he thought the duty more likely to be performed in the spirit, and with the understanding; the sense being not so broken, nor the affections interrupted, as in reading the line betwixt.'[1] The same custom is generally adopted by the United Brethren in their liturgical services; and, as they possess a standard hymn-book, it is attended with no inconvenience.

[1] Eccles. Biog. Vol. VI. p. 201.

upon this subject among the influential members of the Church, presents an insuperable obstacle; and in the meanwhile, it must remain a wish, that those who undertake compilations would be especially cautious, not to excite, by hymns of a low, vulgar, familiar, or exclusive character, the needless prejudices of well-disposed men, and thus cause even 'their good to be evil spoken of.'[1]

The character of our metrical compositions has a decided influence upon the musical accompaniment. Chaste tunes demand verses characterized by strength of idea and manliness of expression; and possessing these qualities, the psalms of the old version, in spite of their ruggedness, preserved the original church-tune in all its primitive honours. The light and frothy tunes which succeeded, came hand in hand with a less dignified style of versification. The close affinity thus subsisting between the poetry and music of the Church, may excuse a slight examination into the defects of our modern compilations of Psalms and Hymns. They may be thus classed:

I. Colloquial expressions, vulgar phrases, inaccurate grammar, rough rhymes, and prosaic numbers. It is plain that many hymns, which have acquired some degree of popularity, were written by pious but unlettered men, whose zeal outran their discretion;

[1] A main difficulty in the way of such a collection, second only to that occasioned by doctrinal differences, would be to silence, not to say satisfy, the imperative demands of a prejudiced taste. 'Even sober-minded Christians have not unfrequently contracted an unaccountable affection for certain words, or lines, or tunes, which appear almost necessary to their devotion. They will require a new collection not merely to accord with their judgment, but to harmonize with their feelings. Every one will impatiently demand the admission of his favourites, like other favourites, not so much on account of their real merit, which he would find it difficult to point out, as from personal attachment or habitual regard.' Quart. Rev. Vol. XXXVIII. p. 51.

and who, in their attempt to express their feelings in a style, the true character of which they did not understand, engaged in their task in too plodding a manner; first putting down final words which make a jingle, and then shaping the ideas to what seemed an exact fit. The composition thus proceeded without any previous plan or purposed connexion of parts; the rhyme frequently becoming the parent of the thought, and the language being made to turn and twist itself in its voluntary shackles, without the slightest regard to propriety of diction, or even grammar and common sense. In the mind of such versifiers, rhyme, and the capital letter which begins the line, seem to form the only distinction between poetry and prose: and thus, if the product of their exertions were written in another form, there would be nothing to distinguish it from some loose, straggling portion of an ungrammatical sermon. Even when there is no positive violation of the rules of syntax, the hymn is frequently but 'a series of independent verses, collocated as they came, and the burden a cento of phrases, figures, and ideas, the common property of every writer who has none of his own, and therefore found in the works of each, unimproved, if not unimpaired, from generation to generation. Such rhapsodies may be sung from time to time, and keep alive devotion already kindled; but they leave no trace on the memory, make no impressions on the heart, and fall through the mind as sounds glide through the ear—pleasant it may be in their passage, but never returning to haunt the imagination in retirement, or in the multitude of thoughts to refresh the soul.'[1]

Yet there is an energy and unction in some hymns,

[1] Preface to 'The Christian Psalmist,' by J. Montgomery.

not formed on a very correct model, which incline us to stifle the remonstrances of taste, and through the influence of custom even to defend the very discords which grate upon a stranger's ear. But where simplicity and fervour are wanting, nothing but the force of habit can deaden a sense of disgust.

If however we were compelled to decide between hymns of an ungrammatical character or none, we might well pardon a few literary incongruities, where spiritual nourishment is obtained. But we are enclosed in no such dilemma. 'We are not without abundant proof, that hymns may be as splendid in poetry as they are fervent in devotion; and' we possess 'many popular pieces, the untaught workmanship of men who had no names in literature, but whose piety inspired them to write in verse, and sometimes with a felicity which the most practised masters of song might envy, but unless "the Spirit gave them utterance" could not compass with their utmost art.' [1]

II. Many compilers, having a taste for poetry, and a sense of the evils which result from an utter disregard to literary propriety, have endeavoured to preserve some analogy between idea and expression; but, in so doing, have fallen into the other extreme, of giving their selection a too decidedly poetic character. Not that they have imbued it too deeply with the genuine spirit of poetry, which shines often through the simplest medium; but employed high and sounding epithets, and crowded the scanty line with long straggling adjectives, which, however specious when hastily read, sound perfectly ridiculous when gravely spelled out, syllable by syllable, to a slow tune by a whole congregation. Now it is universally admitted

[1] Preface to 'The Christian Psalmist.'

that lofty and wordy epithets drain the blood from an idea; and thus, even if congruous in other respects, may well be spared in religious compositions, where, at all times, idea is of far higher moment than expression. But the greatest evil remains behind. The mass of every congregation consists of the poor; and to deprive them of their especial property in the psalmody is an infringment upon their rights. Now nothing so effectually places a barrier between the composition and their comprehensions as tumour of expression. The words may be very fine, but they are not understood. They are to them but

'Heaps of huge words uphoorded hideously,'

and while the evils of inaccurate, vulgar, and prosaic expressions pass unperceived, these, by robbing them of their understanding,[1] deny them a share in the general thanksgiving. Even if they added to the beauty and real merit of the composition, yet their incomprehensible character is surely sufficient to induce every compiler of a Psalm-book to reject them. How much more when, as to their real worth, they are only 'high swelling words of vanity.' The remarks of Beveridge are not without force. 'Ye never hear the common people or any of them complain that the psalms which they sing in their churches are too plain, too low, or too heavy for them. But they rather love and admire them the more for it, and are more edified by the use of them. The plainer they are, the sooner they understand them—the lower the style is, the better it is levelled to their capacities; and

[1] What idea have poor people of the commencement of Addison's version of the 19th Psalm, introduced into most Psalm-books?

The *spacious firmament* on high,
With all the *blue etherial sky*,
And *spangled heavens*, a *shining frame*,
Their *Great Original* proclaim.

the heavier they go, the easier they can keep pace with them.' [1]

A frequent use of metaphors and allegories is objectionable for the same reason, especially when carried through many lines. A scriptural allegory or simile, well introduced, may indeed add greatly to the beauty and force of an idea—but if intended to be understood by the poor, it should be clear, simple, and concise. As to metaphors in hymns strung together, like Burns' beautiful similes in his Tam O'Shanter, nothing can be conceived more preposterous and unfortunate. Who can avoid feeling the absurdity of the following lines, when given out to be sung by a congregation, the greater part of which are poor people—

> So fades a summer cloud away—
> So sinks the gale when storms are o'er—
> So gently shuts the eye of day—
> So dies a wave along the shore. [2]

It is worse than vain to offer such food to the poor. They are no judges of poetic ornament. Upon them, brilliant expressions and polished metaphors are thrown away. Their sense of beauty comprehends not the expression, but the devotional sentiment, according to Herbert—

> 'The fineness, which a hymn or psalm affords,
> Is, when the soul unto the lines accords. [3]

III. A third evil, which necessarily narrows the range of the musical accompaniment, is the want of a variety of metres. The whole hundred and fifty psalms of the new version are included in six metres. Upon the first blush of this fact, it is evident that the translators laid themselves under such grievous restrictions, as to nullify any attempt to give a correct

[1] Beveridge's Defence, p. 42.
[2] Selection of Psalms dedicated to the Archbishop of York.
[3] Herbert's Temple :—'A true Hymn.'

and spirited idea of the original. This defect, however, is here noticed, from its evil influence upon the tune. The superiority of the German school of music to our own, arises in a great measure from the high state of its parochial psalmody, by the abounding and harmonious combinations of which, the Lutherans imbibe a love and taste for genuine music almost with their mother's milk. But their tunes acquire much of their richness and majesty from the immense varieties of their metres; which afford scope to the genius of composers. The German hymnology partakes, in no small degree, of the character of the people, who both in their language and manners, have somewhat of an oriental cast. Luther, who possessed in a high degree the peculiar national characteristics, boldness and fervour, shunned no possible variety of metre calculated to answer the design of the service, and sprinkled with an unsparing hand every warmth of expression, and richness of imagery to arouse the attention, and kindle the affections of his people. Hence the perfection of their parochial psalmody. [1]

[1] It must however be admitted, that the German language, by its copiousness and facility of combination, is more favourable for varied measures, than one so peculiarly barren in words of feminine terminations as the English. Thus in examining the few metres which abound in double rhymes, we cannot but observe the great difficulty encountered by composers to find words suited for their purpose. After ringing changes upon the few, which are truly legitimate, most of which end in *ation*, we find even rhymists of respectability driven to doggrel, and taking advantage of any two words which, put together, might jingle with their feminine companion. It were not difficult to multiply examples of this Hudibrastic subterfuge. What can be said in defence of such rhymes as occur in the following lines:

'Tis a joyful day we *live in*,
God is doing wondrous things,
See the foe before him *driven*.
Again,
Tho' a hostile world *oppose it*,
God's own cause must yet prevail,
True it is, and he who *knows it*;

Thus also we meet with such choice rhymes as honour, upon her, Zion,

The inadequacy of the common metres to give effect to the Psalms, as lyrical pieces, has long been admitted; and as early as the reign of Queen Elizabeth, Sir Philip Sydney, and his sister, the Countess of Pembroke, composed a version abounding in imitations of the choicest Greek, Latin, and Italian metres. The present Bishop of Down and Connor in his preface to a metrical version of the Psalms, has assigned his reasons for adopting a more liberal and lyric style than many of his predecessors. 'As well for the purpose of suiting the style to the sentiment, as for avoiding monotony, and introducing an agreeable interchange, I have judged a considerable variety of metres to be requisite; and have diversified my stanza, according as the nature of the poem seemed to indicate the adoption of a sedate and equable, a loftier or more animated, a more solemn, tenderer, or more plaintive strain.'[1] These versions however seem to have been undertaken rather as literary experiments, than auxiliaries to public devotion.

To the six metres of the New Version, a few have been added in many collections of hymns. So far there might seem an improvement; and yet, upon examination, it is impossible to avoid being struck with the unfortunate taste, which could most ingeniously pass by appropriate measures, and light upon such as were decidedly of an unecclesiastical stamp. This then must be mentioned as another fault to be avoided.

IV. Metres too light and theatrical. It will readily be admitted that in poetry as in music, there should

rely on, saviour, endeavour. Even the classic Heber was driven, by the poverty of the language, to connect together as rhymes, Creator, nature. See his Missionary Hymn.

[1] Preface to Bishop Mant's Psalms, p. viii.

be a distinction both in manner, and in matter, between sacred and profane. A metre, which resembles the movements in a dance, must, if introduced into the Church, arouse unpleasant associations; and yet such metres not unfrequently obtrude themselves into modern Psalm-books. Nay, hymns have been actually formed upon the model of some drunken ballad, whose lines have terminated with the most senseless repetitions, or even with sounds to which no idea can, or is intended to be attached. And so mistaken has been the judgment of some compilers, that they have designedly, and as a meritorious act, applied the most worldly metres, hitherto monopolized by Satan himself, to scriptural sentiments proposed for the public worship. In a selection lately published, we are favoured with the adaption of one of Burns' peculiar metres to sacred words, though it is stated to be designed, not so much for public as private use:—

'Woe and wailing shall be o'er, then,
Weeping shall be heard no more, then,
Let us quickly sweetly soar, then,
To the land of the blessed.
Not an eye shall shed a tear, there,
None shall feel or grief or fear, there,
Every face a smile shall wear, there,
In the land of the blessed![1]

A yet more secular jingle has been adopted in some churches, where a better taste ought to obtain. The hymn alluded to, is stated to be composed by a converted Hindoo, and on that account doubtless has won its way into many psalm-books. But surely it does not follow, because a warm-hearted heathen, in a moment of spiritual excitement, composes some broken English in broken metre, that it must be sung

[1] Union Hymn Book. With this exception, the quotations in this volume are from Psalm-books in use among Churches belonging to the Establishment.

by a congregation accustomed to speak their mother tongue in purity. It is evident that homely as the composition is, it has been corrected by some hand, before it was presented to an English audience :

> ' Come on, my friends, let's mend our pace, sing glory, glory, glory,
> For we shall see Him, face to face, sing glory, glory, glory,
> With Abr'am, Isaac, Jacob too, who rest in glory, glory, glory,
> Let's keep the blessed prize in view; 'tis glory, glory, glory.' [1]

These are not light evils. They are an offence to many, and bring a scandal upon our Christian assemblies. But a blemish of yet greater magnitude is,

V. Too great familiarity in addresses to the Saviour: Of this, it were not difficult to quote many instances, the effusions perhaps of an intense spiritual affection, but of dubious propriety under any circumstances, and certainly not calculated for the indiscriminate use of a large congregation. No language can be proper which serves in any degree to generate irreverential feelings, lower the divine character, and induce us to forget, that while the Messiah has, in his unbounded love and wisdom, condescended to manifest himself unto us as the Prince of Peace, he still bears the titles, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father.

It cannot, however, be expected, that all persons should concur in opinion, respecting what is, and what is not becoming in our addresses to Christ. Some assume an uncommon and morbid degree of respect, as a cloak for real indifference. Such would shrink from many an expression, which might well accord with the feelings of others, who live in constant communion with the Friend of their souls.

[1] This vulgar ditty is found in more than one Church Psalm-book. How ill does it accord with the solemnity and sobriety of the Church services ! Had it not been asserted to be a Hindoo measure, we should have imagined it an imitation of some old English ballad.

How then are we to draw the line between propriety and impropriety? Let others decide—so much at least may be observed, that the more closely we follow Scriptural language as our guide, the more likely are we to use 'sound speech which cannot be condemned' by man, and will assuredly be approved by God. Few in the present day love the Lord Jesus Christ more tenderly than St. John and St. Paul—certainly none have given greater proof of their love;—if then we confine our epithets to those, which they applied to Him, accustomed to a far more fervid, and unshackled mode of expression, we may be sure, that our terms will neither detract from the intense affection we feel to his sympathetic manhood, nor trench upon the deep reverence due to His everlasting Godhead. If we seek for a further example, can we do better than turn to the chaste and affectionate language of our Liturgy, compiled by men, many of whom had such love to the Saviour, that they laid down their lives for his sake, and 'whose bones lie scattered around the pit, like as when one breaketh and heweth wood upon the earth?'[1]

[1] Psalm cxli. 8. The above remarks respecting hymns, are for the most part confined to that which mainly influences the musical accompaniment, viz. the *style* of composition. A word however may be added, upon the selection of subjects, though not properly included within the range of this essay. As our Church service embraces every kind of public duty, whether prayer, praise, or instruction, it might be deemed proper, that each of these three grand divisions should confine itself to its particular province. Still as mournful subjects accord with the very nature of music, no less than the example of Scripture, it would seem needless bondage, merely for the sake of a rigid regularity, to lock up every soft stop, and interdict every minor key. If, however, hymns of such a cast be admitted, it may be questioned whether subjects of meditation, addresses to the soul, individual experiences, didactic sentences, and exclusive application of biblical promises, however becoming in the closet, or perhaps 'secretly among the faithful,' are exactly in character in a mixed congregation. We might reasonably conclude, that where a large company, bearing the name of Christ, have met together professedly for the same grand purposes, whether praise or prayer, the subjects of either should be such, as might find a ready

From our metrical Church compositions, we pass to the music, in which they are generally clothed. To determine its character, it may be well to bring it to the test of certain principles, which shall approve themselves to the mind, as obviously essential to the structure of a sound ecclesiastical tune.

I. The character of the tune should accord with the sanctity of the place and occasion.

II. It should be such as to allow the meanest and most untutored person in the congregation readily to unite.

III. It should be free from monotony and dulness.

IV. It should be suited to the subject of the Psalm or Hymn with which it is connected.

Now it must be acknowledged by all persons of observation, whether musical or not, that these rules, the soundness of which is evidenced in the very nature and design of the exercise, are not rigidly observed in our churches. Few things are more revolting than the

response in the general character and feeling. Where indeed individuals know not the true spring of all acceptable service, love to God, they can have as little concern with the accents of praise as with the breathings of prayer; but otherwise the hymns presented them 'should be so general, that any individual may join in them without impropriety, and at the same time possess a sort of personal applicability to each separate worshipper. Hymns for public service should thus be suited to all times and seasons, to every rank and condition of men, to every state of religious feeling. They are the common property of the religious assembly: each individual may appropriate their general language, as far as possible to his peculiar case, but he must not expect them to accommodate themselves, to what we will call, the accidents of his spiritual state.'—Quarterly Review, Vol. xxxviii. p. 44. The neglect of attending to the rule thus judiciously laid down, has occasioned much incongruity in public worship. Expressions not only becoming, but beautiful in the lips of those to whom they spiritually applied, have assumed almost an offensive character when uttered by men perfectly ignorant and careless of the sacred truths, thus claimed as a private inheritance. Surely the compiler of hymns, may, in the whole range of Scriptural subjects, find sufficient of a general character, for all the purposes of our common worship!

wretched ditties which frequently obtrude themselves between the parts of our beautiful service, in response to the invitation of the clerk. Upon the countenances of some they may excite a smile; but others feel them more acutely, as a stab to devotion, and an insult to the purest feelings of the uplifted spirit. They see in them such a deplorable abuse of a noble talent, that they may well be excused, if they feel this consideration sufficiently rebuke any ludicrous association which might otherwise be suggested.

I. The first rule is violated when tunes are introduced of a light and frivolous character. An erroneous impression is apt to prevail, especially in country places, that none other but loud, boisterous, and rapid melodies can rouse the attention of the people. Their attention may indeed be aroused; but whether their edification is thereby furthered is disputable. The mind, ever ready to please itself with worldly associations, and yield a blind admiration to mere skill, can receive little spiritual profit from compositions, that partake neither of the solemnity of the services they are intended to support, nor of the reverential awe which rests upon the house in which they are performed.

Were the pieces, indeed, of superior excellence,—the characteristic productions of some master spirits,—if we dared not plead their toleration, we should yet seal their banishment with regret. But in most instances their character is widely different. Not only do they fail to promote edification, but continually violate those principles of musical taste, which are almost intuitive in every mind. The anthems, fugues, psalm-tunes, and other pieces in general use throughout the country are, as a body, beneath criticism. They have noise and that is all. They possess none of that exqui-

site blending of sound and idea, which long lingers in the affection, and in moments of thoughtfulness and melancholy musing, is ever at hand to soothe or to enliven. The fact is, that in general, they claim neither sweetness of melody nor breadth of harmony —and the mind wearies itself with the attempt to shape that which is evidently shapeless, and bring the noisy and discordant particles to something of a consistent form. They claim no property to redeem their incongruous introduction into the house of God upon his holy day.

But another species of composition, equally irreconcileable with the sanctity of the place and occasion, is sometimes to be met with in more polished congregations. It is not uncommon for well-intentioned persons who have been captivated by some secular melody of the day, to introduce it into the church, and so deem that 'they are doing God service.' Now it may not be asserted, that a tune is in itself necessarily defiled by the character of the composer, or its primary design. It is barely possible, that its complexion might not be unsuited to the sanctity of the service to which it is applied; yet the associations connected with it are sufficient to render it a most unfit medium of spiritual communications. When for instance the pleasing melody of the tune called Prospect is performed in the church, no words, however sacred,[1] can blot from the mind every remembrance of the equally pleasing, but profane lines of Ben Jonson, to which they were originally composed. Besides that there is a want of proper feeling and correct taste in going elsewhere to gather the glittering tinsel of theatrical music, when the

[1] It is frequently applied to the hymn,
'There is a land of pure delight.'

richest bullion of untouched gold lies neglected at our very feet.[1]

Similar to this, is the custom of mutilating some masterly and splendid sacred composition of a more extended character, and obliging it in contempt of its original design, to usurp, in a cramped and altered form, the place of the genuine Psalm-tune. Nothing can be more wanton and needless, than the efforts made to accommodate the works of great masters to

[1] Thus in a selection of some note we are favoured with a hymn set to the Scotch air, Robin Adair. If the words of the original song are borne in mind, the parody sounds perfectly impious.

'Who can poor sinners save?
Jesus the Lord.
Who died, that we might *live?*
Jesus the Lord.
Sinners the very chief,
Bowed down with sin and grief,
Find at the cross relief,
Only believe.'

Here the tune has no very riotous melody—but we meet with another hymn applied to the drunken Welsh measure 'Ar hyd y nos.' The reader will readily perceive that great liberty has been taken with a beautiful hymn of Newton's, to render it suitable:

'One there is above all others,
O how he loves!
His is love beyond a brother's,
O how he loves!
Earthly friends may fail and leave us,
This day kind—the next bereave us;
But this friend will ne'er deceive us.—
O how he loves!'

Nunn's Selection, pp. 64. 87.

The propriety of applying the metre and tune of 'God save the King' to hymns, is equally dubious. 'This solemn invocation to the Almighty' as has been justly observed, 'sounds, as commonly sung, more like a song of triumph, than a prayer for the preservation of the Sovereign.'[1] The tune is moreover applied so exclusively as the National Anthem, and sung on every kind of secular occasion, that its spiritual character is almost lost, and the associations connected with it at any time hardly devotional. Nothing need be said of the impropriety of adopting such tunes as 'Rule Britannia,' and 'Britons strike home,' because though they have worked their way into some dissenting places of worship, no instance has occurred of our churches being profaned by their introduction.

[1] 'The Art of Improving the Voice and Ear,' p. 166.

a purpose not originally contemplated. Respect to the memory of the dead ought to be some check to this restless and ill-judged interference. It is the mark of a coward to take advantage of the absence of another, to mutilate and abuse his labours. And it may be safely asserted, that the individual who thought proper to mould into a Psalm-tune, by subtraction and addition of his own, the commencing movement of Handel's well-known air: 'I know that my Redeemer liveth' would as soon have thought of rushing into a lion's den, had the irritable and haughty composer been alive to defend his rights.[1]

But not only is the assumed liberty unjustifiable, its design of imparting pleasure often fails of its end. Those indeed who are unacquainted with the original, as it sprung from the masterly invention of the author, may welcome it even in a masqued and fantastic form; for the genius of a Handel, a Haydn, or a Mozart will beam through the murkiest clouds that may gather around; but those, of whom there are many in most congregations, to whose ear every note of the original is familiar, cannot be insensible to such musical perversions. And if only one person finds his feelings insulted, it is argument enough for the discontinuance of a practice, perfectly needless, while we possess so rich a store of genuine ecclesiastical harmonies.

II. As with other things, so with music,

> 'When evils come, they come not single spies,
> But in battalions.'

The tunes of the character just specified are further objectionable, as they generally involve the violation of our second rule. They present obstacles to that unity, which is the chief charm of

[1] A similar liberty has been taken with the Grand Chorus in Haydn's 'Creation,' 'The heavens are telling.'

congregational Psalmody. And this in many ways. First, by their lightness and rapidity. All great bodies move slowly. They possess power; but they require time to develope it, and space to apply it; otherwise their strength becomes weakness, by their efforts falling short of their object. To expect the mixed sounds, from the throats of an undisciplined multitude, to perform the same or similar antics with the single, volant, and flexible voice of a Catalani, is palpably unreasonable. Let the same tune be presented to both; while the former are bringing their weighty powers to bear upon it, like the grappling claws of some Newcastle steam-waggon, the latter is skimming along the notes with the speed of a bird. The voice of the multitude is harsh, diverse, and unbending in management—the voice of a practised singer, on the other hand, is, by natural power and exercise, perfectly at its possessor's command—it is the smooth and ready consequence of the intention, the very echo of the will. Thus, when a note is sounded, it is not, upon the moment, taken up, and responded to by every one that professes to sing in the great congregation. Some portion of time is lost, too minute perhaps in its duration to obtain even a name, but sufficiently long to throw back the unwieldy tone, and in a rapid movement, leave it to follow up, as it may, a clumsy, inarticulate, and breathless chase. As the first sound, moreover, uttered by the unskilful member of such an assembly, may not precisely chime in with the general harmony, time is requisite to enable him to correct his ear, and assure his mind, by falling gradually into the united and decisive confluence of voice and instrument, which floats around him. A rapid movement, therefore, deprives him of all hope of fulfilling his particular duty. Ere the note is determined, and while

he is hovering over it, like a hawk before it pounces upon its prey, he is called off to another and another, till wearied out, by his unsuccessful exertions, he at last rests content to lend an ear, when his Church intended him to contribute a voice. If then a tune be designed for the mass of a congregation, it must be satisfied to assume a deliberate character, abounding in minims and semibreves, and not in crotchets and quavers.

Again, the sudden and marked transitions of many tunes of this kind, present needless difficulties—passing from one chord to another through a strange and unexpected interval, without breaking the fall by some easy and leading note. Far from being an inherent defect, this is frequently a great beauty, and some of our most original and magnificent harmonies abound in the most startling transitions. But such are manifestly unsuited to a mixed assembly, where the composition should be as simple, as the performance is rough. If, when the tune is steadily pursuing a strait track, time and patience are requisite for the proper developement of each several note, it is natural to suppose that any unexpected break will be likely to occasion confusion. Observe a large carrier's waggon heavily laden, drawn by its eight horses, slowly and steadily pacing along the road—mark with what difficulty the mass is made to swerve in any respect from the strait line of its course—how that difficulty is increased, when it is needful to turn into some bye-road, running in an acute angle, and still more, when it is necessary to face directly about; what time is required—what labour—how great the danger of an overturn! And if you ask the reason, it arises merely from that very magnitude, which at the same time that it constitutes its weakness in any feat of agility, constitutes its strength in pursuing a direct object

in its own way. Observe on the other hand a single-horse carriage, with what ease and swiftness it makes the most difficult turns and evolutions; and if you ask the reason, it arises from its very lightness, which at the same time that it constitutes its infirmity as to burden, constitutes its power as to rapidity. The design of each is suited to its particular capabilities. Such also is the difference between the members of a large congregation, and a solitary singer. The latter finds no difficulty from any want of agility in giving effect to the most abrupt transitions. He has only one voice to command, and that voice in subjection to his will. But the former, consisting of a great variety of voices, and musical comprehensions, yoked together to apply their united powers to the same object, are aghast at any sudden precipice; while some standing stock still, others hovering over the brink, and others making a fainthearted plunge, endanger a psalmodial summerset. Hence the necessity of choosing tunes not only grave in character—but simple and flowing in their design. The opposite practice is one cause why, in many parishes, the ground has been so exclusively occupied by the singers. Nothing could better answer their end of monopolising the psalmody to themselves, than the adoption of such tunes, as were too rapid or rugged for the congregation. Idleness is not the most general natural infirmity of man; and there can be little doubt, but that, had the tune been suited to the capacities of the multitude, there had been less cause to complain of their silence. Let music once be intelligible, and it will soon wind itself into the affections of the people.

Another obstacle that comes under this head is the complex character of many tunes. This is especially seen in those miserable compositions, that are presented to many a country congregation under the

prostituted name of fugues. Something of that character they do unquestionably assume, and for that very reason are inappropriate for the general psalmody. The fugue, which is termed justly, though quaintly, by an old writer 'the prime flower of figurate descant,' is further described by him 'as begun by some one single part, and then seconded by a following part, repeating the same or such like notes, and so on, according to the number of parts, which do follow or come in after the same manner, one after the other, the leading parts still flying before those that follow; whence its name.'[1] This is perhaps as popular a definition as could be given, and is sufficient for our purpose. Now it may readily be seen, that for the performance of such a composition, there must be a proper distribution of parts among the singers;—the treble, alt, tenor, and bass being taken up in order by each set, without mutual interference. For this purpose, however simple the fugue may be, some degree of knowledge and previous practice is necessary; and when, as in a large congregation, each singer is left to his own uneducated impulse, to suit his voice to his humour, without the curb of modesty or skill, the result must be confusion. In the performance of such pieces therefore, the people, ignorant of the first principles of musical science, have no choice—they must either be silent, or they mar the music! Away then with all country fugues and anthems, if we seek to cherish real parochial psalmody!

Another class of tunes, without assuming the scientific appellation of fugues, display a fondness for occasional division of parts, perfectly admissible in extended compositions, executed by a practised choir,

[1] Simpson's Compendium of Practical Musick.

but only apt to bewilder a congregation. It is well that every chord should have its complement; but each part should sound in combination, and be sustained by its auxiliaries. When the treble is left to perform singly, and the bass has its pauses and places of conjunction to mark, the mind of the singer is too much engrossed to feel the benefit of a spiritual exercise, and the people at large are utterly precluded from a cordial participation. They are continually at fault. They can understand neither when to sing, nor when to be silent. The bass is ever obtruding itself upon the treble, and the treble poaching into the domains of the bass. And thus, the compositions, professing to be congregational, are in effect choral, and confined to the few persons who dignify themselves by the name of 'the singers!' But this species of tune brings with it another evil. The scope of a plain verse is found far too narrow for its full developement. Hence the necessity of embarrassing repetitions of words, lines, and even syllables. Now if repetitions are at all admissible, it can only be when neither musical nor poetical proprieties are in any respect violated. For this purpose, the composer must adapt his composition to certain words; and if, as in translations, it be necessary to apply other words to the same composition, it is easy to see, that great skill, patience, and ingenuity are requisite to prevent violations of rhythm and accent. What bound then can be set to such violations, when a tune demanding constant repetitions is applied arbitrarily to the successive verses of a hymn, without any other restriction than its accordance with the general measure? It were not however of much moment, if the only consequence was a transgression against musical taste; but not unfrequently common sense is outraged by unmeaning and

even ridiculous perversions.[1] Not only do these repetitions embrace portions of lines and solitary expressions, which have neither force nor beauty sufficient to demand such attention; but the sense of a passage is frequently interrupted, and syllables are severed from the word to which they belong, without any regard to the comprehensions of the people! Some tunes, less complex in their character, only repeat the closing line of the verse; and a voluntary custom has obtained in many places, to rehearse the last two lines of the hymn. As such repetition is sufficiently simple to be readily understood, its want of character is the chief objection, —the sentiment not generally requiring so marked a musical distinction. In short the less repetition and net-work there is in a plain psalm tune, the less confusion will there be in its performance; and in vain shall we look for a thorough reformation of our Psalmody, till the entire adoption and restoration of the good old Church tune in all its ancient rights and privileges. There alone is found that freedom from light runs, sudden transitions, ornamental flourishes, rapid movements, and perplexing repetitions, which are sure to blur over all attempts to give full energy to this most interesting and influential portion of divine worship.

III. It may be imagined, that the species of tune recommended in the foregoing remarks, cannot possess that life and energy so necessary to sustain the popular attention. Hence the objection has arisen, that what is gained in facility of execution, is lost in diminution of interest; and that, without noise and motion, the musical feelings of a congre-

[1] Some tunes require the repetition of half the concluding line. Thus "Our poor polluted heart," which is the last line of a verse, is broken into repetitions of Our poor pol-!

gation must remain torpid. Now if languor were a necessary adjunct of a slow and majestic tune, we should indeed find some difficulty to reconcile feeling and understanding. Happily, however, we are spared this perplexity: neither harmony nor melody are destroyed, or even impaired by suitable variations of time. It is with music, as with poetry. In both arts, the most sublime and weighty passages require deliberate and marked emphases to render them effective—if hurried over lightly, their character is lost. A pleasant superficial composition, on the other hand, agrees well with an easy and flowing delivery. Gravity, solemnity, and majesty of step, are as needful to inspire feelings of awe and reverence in music, as in manners; and when we consider of how great importance it is, that the seriousness of the spirit should be maintained in every part of divine service, it were enough, though no other end were gained by the introduction of this species of Psalmody.

But it may be fearlessly asserted, that it is inferior to no kind of composition, in arousing the attention, or keeping alive an excited interest. It yields to none, in ministering to the very highest degree of musical gratification. To mistake noise for music, and rattle for effect, is the very lowest degree of common taste. What is the character of that music, which our Milton describes in his powerful language as

'able to create a soul
Even under the ribs of death?'

Neither the startling blast of the trumpet, nor the thundering roll of the drum, the only musical instrument without music, but,

'A soft and solemn breathing sound.'[1]

[1] Milton's Comus.

Thus does one, who was no mean judge, assign the most hyperbolical effects in his enthusiastic imagination, to a 'sound' combining the two grand qualities of solemnity and softness.

But it must be admitted, that not every slow tune has sufficient character to atone for constitutional heaviness. There are many, especially of the French school, so insipid and inane, that their majesty verges into stupidity, their simplicity into simpleness. Nothing can be more melancholy, than to hear a French congregation, maundering moodishly among the commonest chords, alike devoid of harmony and melody. Such tunes to be in keeping should accompany the march of a body of moaning monks on some painful pilgrimage. But our choice need not attach to them. We have no lack of compositions rich both in melody and harmony: and that such will be comprehended, and admired when lighter ones are forgotten, may be seen from the hold which Luther's Hymn and the Hundredth Psalm unceasingly retain of the public ear,—tunes, which increase the more in popular estimation, the better they are known.

It is, moreover, a mistake to suppose that tunes of this class, in which each word has its distinct note, and all generally of the same length, must be performed in the same time. Some, as for instance the Old Hundred and Fourth Psalm, are in their own character energetic and spirited. Such, therefore, should be played with greater sprightliness, than others naturally more solemn and sedate. And not only so, but the time ought to vary according to the subject of the poetry. To make no difference between the language of praise, and that of contrition, when psalms upon both subjects are applied to the same tune, is manifestly incorrect. Now a very marked

distinction is made by a judicious variation of time; and hence the same notes which have, in solemn sadness, accompanied a penitential prayer, may by additional speed and briskness, convey heavenward the strains of a rapturous thanksgiving. By a careful attention to these remarks, the true church-tune will be found to possess variety enough, and spirit enough, for keeping alive the musical zeal of any congregation; and to have this property peculiar to itself, that the more it is exercised, the more it approves itself to the taste, and wins itself into the affections.

Perhaps one cause for the very prevalent idea of the dulness of the species of tune recommended may be found in the usual style of its performance. By a singular inconsistency, when a tune of a grave cast is presented to those who make no secret of their attachment to lighter compositions, it is forthwith drawled over with such unmeaning tardiness, that there is no possibility of comprehending its character as a whole. The Hundredth Psalm is indeed a beautiful tune—but such is the style of its performance, that it is not easy to discover the peculiar charm which has enabled it to work its way into popularity. Instead of being presented to the people one regular and flowing melody, it is generally sung with such deliberation, that the breath is more than expended upon each word, and instead of a mutual connection and dependence, the notes stand apart and disunited, rather like beads upon a string than the links of a chain—each chord isolated, and resting its claims for admiration, not upon its relation as a part to a whole, but upon its individual and peculiar harmony; as though a judgment of the architecture of a building should be attempted to be formed by measuring and

weighing separately each stone of which it is composed.[1] To understand the full beauty of a tune is impossible, when it is thus leisurely dissected, limb by limb ; besides that necessarily the energy and life, of which it is so capable, and which are its chief recommendation to the popular ear, are entirely lost. In medias res tutissimum. Let the character of a tune be properly considered, and its time determined, and we shall readily acknowledge, that full and deliberate harmony is perfectly consistent with vigour and sprightliness.

It is a custom with some, who are zealous to reform the Psalmody, to crowd upon the attention of the people a great variety of tunes. The wisdom of this measure, however, is open to doubt. The opportunities for sacred music in our services are not numerous. Too extensive a selection, therefore, prevents a congregation mastering the mechanism and studying the properties of a good tune. This can only be effected by frequent repetitions ; and so far from these repetitions occasioning fatigue and disgust, the more a masterly composition is practised, as has been already observed,

[1] Thus, the fashionable fondness for Luther's Tune to his Hymn on the Judgment, would be perfectly unaccountable—were it not considered that it *is* fashionable, and that the blasting of the trumpet between the lines, than which nothing can be more silly and out of character, redeems it from total condemnation. Spencer describes a similar performance so accurately, that we might almost have supposed he had been present at some of our evening concerts.

> The whiles a most delitious harmony
> In full straunge notes was sweetly heard to sound,
> That the rare sweetnesse of the melody
> The feeble sences wholly did confound,
> And the frayle soule in deepe delight nigh drownd :
> And when it ceast, shril trompets loud did bray,
> That their report did far away rebound ;
> And when they ceast, it gan again to play.
>
> Faery Queen, iii. c. xii. st. 6.

the better will it be understood, and its value appreciated. This is the very principle upon which our Church acts in the provisions of its services. We are not invited every Sabbath-day to a new and altered Liturgy; but the same form of sound words is recommended to our use, week by week, and thus their beauty is gradually unfolded to the comprehension, and their preciousness imbibed in the heart. A good tune will bear repetition without injury; and as we cannot expect the people generally to practise at home, we must be content to allow them time and opportunity in the public services for becoming acquainted with those measures proposed to them as a medium of thanksgiving.

We should be cautious, however, not to weary a congregation by the introduction of too extended a hymn. There are individuals so accustomed to value sacred things by their length, that they are ready to sacrifice almost every other consideration, to the desire of keeping up the ball for a stated time. Thus Watts took great credit to himself, that he had discovered a more rapid mode of singing, whereby a greater number of verses could be 'sung with less expense of time and breath.' Philip Henry also, in his family worship, was accustomed to sing a whole psalm throughout, though perhaps a long one, and 'to prevent tedium, to sing quick, yet,' as is added in a parenthesis, 'with a good variety of pleasant and proper tunes.'[1] It is thus evident, that the 'singing quick' had no reference to the proper musical character of the psalm, but to the opportunity it afforded of compassing much singing in little time. Now if it be necessary for edification to crowd a whole psalm into a portion of time too brief to

[1] Ecclesiastical Biogr. Vol. vi. p. 200.

admit its application to music, without adopting what Watts calls, 'a greater speed of pronunciation'[1] than is required for the designed effect, why not apply to it yet greater rapidity, and make it plain reading, or speaking? If the object sought be edification through the operations of the intellect, then possibly music may be rather a hinderance than an advantage; but if it be edification through the excitement of the feelings, then let music assume its proper character—slow if solemn, and more rapid if spirited—and it will best subserve its end.[2] And if the effect be produced, it matters little whether more or fewer verses are sung. In our regular church services, however, the short time allotted for the duty of Psalmody precludes much danger of wearying the attention by too extended a performance; and that tune must indeed be heavy, which affords occasion for complaint in the space of four or five short verses. A stranger stepping into one of our churches, would hardly find the shadow of an excuse to imitate the exaggerations of Burney, who, claiming a traveller's licence, brought home an evil report of certain specimens of Lutheran psalmody, he had heard in a cathedral-church at Bremen:—'After hearing the tune repeated ten or twelve times, I went to see the town, and returning to the cathedral, *two hours after*, I still found the people singing all in unison, and as loud as they could, the same tune to the same accompaniment. I went to the post-office to make dispositions for my departure, and when I returned once more to this church, to my great astonishment, I still found them, vocally and organically, performing the same ditty, the duration

[1] Preface to Watts's Psalms.
[2] 'Eloquence the soul, song charms the sense.'

of which seems to have exceeded that of a Scots' hymn in the time of Charles I.'[1]

IV. The first rule proposed led us to contrast ecclesiastical Music with secular, and to enforce the duty of most religiously observing the distinction in all our services. It is further incumbent upon us to accommodate our tunes, as well to the subject-matter of the words to which they are applied, as to the difference of times and seasons. In order to ensure suitable tunes to their psalms, Sternhold and Hopkins published, together with their version, 'apt notes to sing them withal.' These melodies, borrowed from the old German and French masters, were so arranged that they 'were *apt* and proper for the subject-matter of each Psalm. And where the same tune would serve indifferently for several Psalms, they set it only to one, and referred to the other.'[2] Each individual of the congregation, being thus provided with musical notes was supposed to have sufficient knowledge of the art to use them as a guide to the voice. Though these psalm-books, combining the words and music are no longer in vogue among us, they are still retained in many places abroad. It is evident, however, that such assistances, so far from availing the mass of the people in any country, can only have the effect of encouraging them to sing their discords with the greater boldness and to assume that the music in their books will amply atone for the want of music in their heads, and that the round, square, or lozenge characters before them, are full pledges of the orthodoxy of their musical effusions. Such Psalmody must have resembled the extempore counterpoint practised in the French cathedrals, called chant sur le livre. 'To give some idea of it,'

[1] Present State of Music on the Continent, Vol. ii. pp. 280, 281.
[2] Beveridge's Singing Psalms.

says a French writer, 'imagine fifteen or twenty singers of every description of voices, from the bass to the highest soprano, singing as loud as they can bawl, each according to his own fancy, without either rule or intention, and making every note in the system, both diatonic and chromatic, heard at the same time with the plain chant, which is performed by discordant and harsh voices.'[1]

While however the custom of introducing musical notes into the common psalm-books is wisely discontinued, nothing equivalent has been substituted to regulate the psalmody. In the great body of our churches the choice of tunes is left to the discretion, or rather want of discretion, of the clerk or choristers. Some selections do indeed profess to direct the judgment of a congregation, but often with so little common taste, or even propriety of application, that the cure is worse than the disease. Of this the compilers themselves seem to have been shrewdly suspicious; and have therefore endeavoured to atone, by the number of their tunes, for the want of discrimination. It is surely to be hoped, that few clergymen stand in need of such blind guides.[2]

The Church of England, in conformity with the practice of the Christian Church from the earliest times, has set apart certain days throughout the year, as fasts or festivals, in commemoration of circumstances intimately connected with our faith

[1] Alexandre Choron. Summary of Hist. Mus.

[2] See as a specimen, Nunn's Selection. It is a pity, by the way, that no settled rule is adopted to ensure some similarity of character in the names of tunes. They used to be called from towns, and places, and events. Now we have—*Submission—Hottentot—Pleyel's Hope—Foundation—Kelly's Vespers—Viator.* The encouragement given by some selectors of Hymns to such compilations of tunes as Rippon's Collection, is greatly to be regretted, as it only tends to propagate specimens of bad taste, and violations of the most common principles of sound musical grammar.

and hope under the present dispensation. Now as these especial seasons are appointed to celebrate different events, it is natural to imagine, that they are designed also to call forth different feelings. They partake of the changing complexion of a Christian's experience—the eye now weeping in sorrow for sin, and again brightening in joy of the Holy Ghost. Thus Christmas is a time of unmingled thanksgiving. All the subjects which it proposes to the mind are subjects of holy joy. 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward man.' The Passion-week, on the other hand, leads to the contemplation of two subjects of surpassing sorrow,—the agony and death of Christ,—and our personal share in that iniquity which oppressed him in the garden of Gethsemane, and slew him upon the cross of Calvary. Again, the spell of our mourning is broken by the blast of the resurrection-trumpet, and Easter wakes us forth to wonder and adore. We smile through our tears, and hail him with acclamations, as he 'knappeth the spear in sunder,' and bursts the bonds of the grave. And as he ascends up on high, 'leading captivity captive, and receiving gifts for men;' we hear the glorious call of the church; 'O sing unto God, and sing praises unto his name! Magnify Him that rideth upon the heavens as it were upon an horse—praise him in his name JAH, and rejoice before Him.'[1] Whitsuntide again bids us praise God, that 'he has sent a gracious rain upon his inheritance; and refreshed it when it was weary.'[2] It is a song of humble thanksgiving for the fulfilment of promised blessings, but not a song of deliverance over foes. And lastly the great

[1] Psalm lxviii. 4. [2] Psalm lxviii. 9.

festival of the Trinity, which sums up and embraces all others in its mysterious depths, comes wrapt in clouds of thick darkness, instilling into the spirit feelings of peculiar solemnity, humiliation, and reverence. 'Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.'[1] Now when we consider the almost unlimited control which Music possesses over the feelings, it can hardly be deemed fanciful to assert, that it may and should be made to express the varied emotions of a devout soul, as elicited on these several occasions. Unchecked thanksgiving for the birth of a Saviour—grief and shame at his sufferings and death—an awakened and lively joy to hail his resurrection, swelling into a holy rapture as he ascends to His Father—humility and thankfulness for the gift of the Spirit,—and a solemn and awe-struck reverence in adoration of the ever-blessed Trinity.

Those who study the character of the old Church Tune will readily acknowledge, that it is fully capable of every requisite variety. Whenever it has failed of effect, the cause must be attributed, not to the tune, but to the negligence of the performance. Bedford asserts, that it was to ensure a proper variety, that 'tunes were composed in common time for common occasions, that others affected a triple time for thanksgiving, and others a slower measure with semibreves for mournful occasions.' And he complains that already in his day, 'the true time was almost lost, because at first imperfectly understood, and since wholly neglected.'[2]

It is therefore the duty of those who have any

[1] Isaiah vi. 5.

[2] Bedford's Abuse of Musick, p. 219.

influence in the Psalmody to study carefully the character of each sound and legitimate tune, and so to apply it, that it may strengthen and not impede the impression designed to be conveyed on occasions of peculiar solemnity.

> ' How many things by season, seasoned are
> To their right praise and true perfection.' [1]

An allusion has been made in a former part of this essay to the objections of Wharton to metrical Psalmody, and of Johnson to devotional poetry in any form. Dr. Burney, in like manner, makes a most deliberate attack upon Psalmodical harmonies. ' Why,' says he, ' is all the congregation to sing, more than to preach, and to read prayers ? ' quoting at the same time the example of the ancient Hebrews and primitive Christians in appointing singing men and singing women, to perform distinct parts in religious rites. Mason in reply, while he admits the correctness of the reference to Jewish customs, denies that it was ever a Christian practice to restrict Church Music to choral performances. He remarks justly the evident design of our Church in all her offices, to associate her members as much as possible with public administrations. Burney's objections, however, rest mainly upon the musical ignorance of the common people. He considers, and not without justice, that

[1] The psalm-tunes in use in the University Church, Oxford, and St. James', Bristol, may be considered as fair samples of the species of tune recommended in this treatise. In the former instance, unhappily, it is not even attempted to give the Psalm its proper congregational character. The members of the University of every rank seem in effect, if not in spirit, to adopt the humble, but mistaken language of one of their number :

> ' We the while of meaner birth,
> Who in that divinest spell,
> Dare not hope to join on earth,
> Give us grace to listen well.'
>
> THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.

" study, practice, and experience, may be at least as necessary to its attainment, as that of a mechanical trade or calling. Such singing, as is customary in our parochial service, gives neither ornament nor dignity to the Psalms or portions of Scripture, which are drawled out and bawled with that unmeaning vehemence, which the Satyrist has described—

> ' So swells each wind pipe,
> Such as from labouring lungs the enthusiast blows
> High sound attempered to the vocal nose.' " [1]

There is sufficient sarcasm in this passage to evince that the writer was more inclined to amuse himself with caricatures, than examine the subject dispassionately. Every sacred employment is unquestionably deserving of some requisite preparation ; but experience markedly denies the assertion, that without such practice, the common class of people are unable to join with propriety in a general thanksgiving. ' In fact, Music, though in one sense an art, yet is in another, a natural faculty, and like many others, distributed in an unequal proportion among the human species. Some say they are utterly devoid of it, which with me,' says Mason, ' is a matter very problematical ; yet admitting that they are, some too are born blind, deaf, or dumb, which does not destroy the position that seeing, hearing, and speaking are natural faculties. Hence the Reformers, when they freed the ritual from Roman intricacies, founded new institutions in primitive practice. They had learned that singing men and singing women, as a separate choir, made no part in the few simple orders which St. Peter and St. Paul had regulated and appointed. They referred themselves also to the sublime apocalyptical

[1] Mason's Essays, III.

visions of St. John, and hence concluded, that as in heaven the whole company of saints, and martyrs, and of just men made perfect, joined in one immense chorus before the throne and before the Lamb, the Church then militant and visible on earth, might in the humblest, yet devout imitation, attempt a similar act of praise and thanksgiving. Hence metrical psalmody. Simple metre was chosen, because it facilitated the general memory—simple melody, because easiest to be performed by the general voice.'[1]

Thus experience shews that few individuals are unable to unite with a congregation in singing a plain Psalm-tune. Still it must be admitted, that the general mode of congregational singing is unisonous. To sing in parts, without which harmony is in a measure lost, requires some ear and more practice. This unisonous singing however, of natural voices, produces an imaginary variety; for though the corresponding notes in different octaves are virtually the same, 'yet there is a variety of tones in treble, contra-tenor, tenor, and bass voices, which, when combined in a numerous chorus, produces an effect of a noble, if not a sublime kind, that must be felt, rather than described.'[2] When a full organ accompanies, the monotony of these unisons is hardly perceived.

The genuine chorale has, however, been considered liable to an objection, which appears at first sight to have considerable weight. It is said 'to be totally divested of accent and rhythm, by the prolongation of each note to almost an equal, and always a tedious length; by which words become as unintelligible, as if they were united to airs of the most modern cast, frittered into divisions, or even loaded with parts as

[1] Mason's Essays, III. [2] Ibid.

much in sequence as in a catch or a glee.'[1] Now that this is partially the case must be allowed. In a tune like the Old Hundredth Psalm, the most insignificant words are necessarily uttered with as great emphasis, have as much time devoted to them, and assume the same importance in the progress of the tune, as those upon which turns the sentiment of the stanza. Nay, words of many parts demand and exhaust as much time and breath upon each trivial syllable, as the very name of Jehovah. This is manifestly an incongruity, and detracts grievously from the perfection of the old chorale as a composition.

Can a remedy then be suggested? Mason thinks there may, and offers what he terms 'a natural and easy one.' It may be well therefore to examine it. First he proposes, as a preliminary measure, to dispense with bars, except at the end of the lines and stanzas, where a correct ear in reading rhyme naturally makes a pause. Then, as the common metres are usually Iambic, that is, the first syllable short and the next long, he recommends that the accompanying notes of the melody should be regulated by the same law. For this purpose it is not necessary to change the notes already in use, but only to vary their respective duration. 'always singing the first as short again as the second, the third as the fourth, and so to the end of each line, prolonging the time of the whole strain to about twice that of solemn recitation.' To ensure the strictest regularity, he would prefer 'the mechanical assistance of the cylindrical or barrel organ to the finger of the best parochial organist;' and his reason is, that 'thus the duration of every note is capable of being adjusted by exact and visible mensuration, so that the eye and rule of the artizan

[1] Mason's Essays, III.

may strictly determine, what the ear and hand of the former could seldom perhaps so accurately execute, and this because the strain would not move according to musical, but metrical laws.'[1]

Now the most obvious question respecting this recipe for a new species of psalmody is, would it answer the design? Would it ensure becoming attention to rhythm and accent, so that each word should have exactly that degree of weight, which its relative importance in the sentence demands? This is a question. The air would indeed more accurately follow the metre, but whether it would more accurately follow the natural inflexion of the voice, when governed by a correct ear, is open to doubt. It might be only exchanging the shackles of music, for the shackles of metre.

Now all must admit, that metrical shackles are shackles; and when, in the reading of a line, the rhythm is strictly observed, nothing in many cases can be more opposite to a natural and intelligent emphasis. But poetry has this advantage, that its shackles sit loose upon it;—where the natural effect is sought, it is able at once to throw them aside, without destroying the general measure. So that a line, which would be intolerable, if scanned in school-boy form, obtains its real character, not by strictly adhering to rigid rules, but by making them bend to the momentary impulses of a correct ear, and poetical judgment. But psalmody, sung by many and varied voices, has manifestly no advantage of this kind. Whatever metrical inflexions or pauses are applied to a psalm-tune, must remain. They cannot be varied according to the dictates of a musical or poetical taste. And this Mason himself allows

[1] Mason's Essays, III.

ensuring the metrical rhythm in all its rigidity by the mechanical aid of a barrel-organ.

The question therefore resolves itself into this—whether it be more natural for a tune to proceed in an uniform and even tenor, or to have the notes alternately short and long. We shall best determine this by examining a stanza, and comparing the two methods with the natural rhythm. Take, as a casual example, Bp. Kenn's well-known Gloria Patri. According to the common church-tune, all the syllables are long. According to Mason's metrical mode they would run thus:

Prăise Gōd frŏm whōm ăll blēssĭngs flōw,
Prăise Hīm, ăll crēaturĕs hēre bĕlōw,
Prăise Hīm ăbōve, yĕ heāv'nlў hōst,
Prăise Fāthĕr, Sōn, ănd Hōlў Ghōst.

Here there are an even number of long and short syllables; and yet it is plain, that instead of coinciding with the natural inflexion, many of the long accents fall upon syllables, which are both grammatically, and according to common sense, short, and vice versa. Let us compare both, therefore, with the same stanza read with a natural emphasis.

Prāise Gōd frŏm whōm āll blēssĭngs flōw,
Prāise Hīm, āll crēaturĕs hēre bĕlōw,
Prāise Hīm ăbōve, yĕ heāv'nlў hōst,
Prāise Fāthĕr, Sōn, ănd Hōlў Ghōst.

Now it is very evident, that here the short accent falls by no means upon the same syllable in each line, but that in common reading there would be a preponderance of long syllables, so that approaching very nearly to the uniform pace of the chorale, the Psalm-tune, in its present monotonous state, would better preserve the true emphasis, than when modified to suit the taste of Mason.

In fact, no human invention can possibly render

music, designed for congregational performance, perfectly subservient to words. This is unquestionably a defect; but it is woven into the very nature of parochial psalmody. It is vain to expect the various and discordant voices of an undisciplined multitude to accommodate themselves to the delicate, and in some cases hardly perceptible, inflexions, requisite to give a sentence its full and natural effect.

Since then accent must in some respect be sacrificed, it remains a question of taste, whether the great machine shall proceed with a heavy and uniform step, or at a hobbling gait like a man with one leg shorter than the other. Some may prefer to apply occasionally a triple measure,—as is successfully done in the case of Bedford and similar tunes,—but no one can flatter himself, that by either the one method or the other, he has overcome the insuperable obstacles presented by the various and discordant materials of a congregation, and made the thousand act with the delicacy, feeling, and agility of the one.

Upon every tune, therefore, offered to a Christian congregation in the House of God, let there be impressed, as with a signet, Gravity—Majesty—Melody—Harmony. Gravity—to bow the spirit in reverence, and forbid the sacrifice of fools—Majesty, to remind the singer of the character of that God, whose high praise is upon his lip—Melody, to entice the ear of the hearer, and take even his wandering affections by guile—and Harmony, to embrace the varying tones of a mixed multitude, and on the instant breathe into them one spirit of concord and of peace. Such unquestionably is the character of the old Church-tune. Nor need its solemnity border upon apathy. The genuine chorale, instead of being wrapt up in monotony and dulness, according to the popular slander, offers scope, within the bounds

of its own enchanted circle, for the exercise of the richest musical imagination. But it raises a forbidding wand against a wanton roaming beyond these bounds; and presents no inducement for human vanity to seek after idle display. It allows every thing for the glory of God—nothing for the ambition of man. At the same time it claims attention from the most fastidious, by the richness and weight of its materials. Instead of the few meagre chords upon which the lighter tunes raise their fanciful superstructure, it grasps in its ample comprehension the most magnificent combinations, the boldest transitions, the simplest modulations, and the sweetest melody, clothed in a chastity that alike attracts the untutored, and approves itself to the mind of the learned.

VII.

THE CHANT.

Enough of earth! Lo! round the sapphire Throne,
Range seraphs, front to front, with rushing wing,
In number numberless, in glory one;
From lip to lip their lauds alternate ring:
Hark! how with angel-touch they sweep the string,
And joyous chant as on Creation's morn;
Holy, Thrice Holy Lord, of Kings the King!
Crowned be that Head once wreathed with pointed thorn!—
Strange! that a seraph's song should wake a mortal's scorn!

The Chant may be denominated the simplest form of musical expression. It has neither the complex involutions of the Anthem, nor the ever-changing harmonies of the Chorale. Its present character, which has not substantially varied from its original construction, is manifested, either in a rapid and uniform intonation, resembling 'the musical pronouncing,' spoken of by St. Augustine, as in use in the churches of Alexandria; or in the distinct articulation of a part of a sentence upon one note, terminating with a few varied and deliberate chords. Among us, the former is exemplified in the plain-chant of our cathedrals; and the latter in the mode in which the psalms of the daily service are sung to the organ. The chant is further performed antiphonally—in the one case, the prayers by the Chaplain and the re-

sponses by the congregation—and in the other, by two choirs alternately singing the successive verses of the psalm; which verses are severally divided into two clauses. This latter species is termed single or double, according to the number of verses it embraces.

The antiquity of the chant is universally admitted, although the author and time of its invention have been controverted. About the middle of the IV. century, St. Ambrose introduced chanting into the services at Milan, whence the practice extended itself throughout the western branch of the Christian Church. He derived it, as St. Augustine informs us, from the Greek Fathers; a testimony confirmed by Eusebius, who adds, 'that a regular choir and method of singing the service was first established, and hymns used in the Church at Antioch, the capital of Syria, during the time of Constantine.'[1] But even before the legal establishment of Christianity, we find from Philo who lived in the I. century a distinct recognition of the use of the alternate chant. 'After supper their sacred songs began:[2] when all were risen they selected from the rest two choirs, one of men and one of women in order to celebrate some festival, and from each of these a person of a majestic form, and well skilled in music was chosen to lead the band; they then chanted hymns in honor of God, composed in different measures and modulations, now singing together, and now answering each other by turns.'[3] The author of the Apostolic Canons[4] speaking of the Chris-

[1] Burney's Hist. Mus. Vol. II. p. 9.

[2] Speaking of the Essenes, whom Eusebius supposes to have been Christians, though they are generally considered a Jewish sect. Had however the Christians and Jews used a different mode of singing, this alone would have convinced him of his error.

[3] Hist. Mus. Vol. II. pp. 4, 5.

[4] Lib. II. cap. 57.

tian service admonishes, that after the lessons 'another should sing the Psalms of David, and the people *succinere* or answer τὰ ἀκροστίχια (ἄκρα τῶν στίχων) the extremes of the verses.'[1] At a still earlier period, Pliny the younger in his well-known letter to Trajan concerning the primitive Christians, uses an expression which has been considered demonstrative of the recitative and interchanging character of their method of singing, 'carmen dicere secum invicem.' It is further probable, that the style thus traced to the first ages of the Church, was in effect but an adaptation of the mode of chanting the Hebrew ritual in the Temple service; embracing such improvements as the progress of knowledge and acquaintance with the music of Pagan countries might suggest. Thus Calvin admits his conviction, 'that, from the beginning, the Christians followed the Jewish use in singing of Psalms, and that in his admonitions to the Ephesians and Colossians, the Apostle evidently recommends this duty which was so much practised by the Jews.'[2] The latter, as we have already observed, confined their music almost exclusively to the Temple; and many parts of the Old Testament lead to the conclusion, that they were not unacquainted with responsive singing. The fact that women assisted in musical divisions,[3] as well as the structure of many Psalms and Prophetical Hymns favour this opinion.[4] Thus Psalm civ. is plainly formed on this model; in which, as Bp. Lowth observes, 'the parts are easily distinguished; inasmuch as while one semichorus always speaks of God in the third person, the other addresses him in the second.' Psalm cxxxvi. presents another specimen—the burden or closing couplet of which is expressly quoted by Ezra as an antiphon.

[1] Mede's Diatribæ, p. 179. [2] Temple Musick, pp. 63, 64.
[3] Psalm lxviii. 25. 1 Chron. xxv. 5, 6. [4] Temple Musick, pp. 85—88.

'And they sang together *by course* in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel.'[1]

A further proof that the Jews made ample use of Responsories and the alternate chant, may be derived 'from the use of the Hebrew word ענה which, in the proper and native signification thereof, being *to answer*, is also used *to sing*, as in Psalm, cxlvii. 7, where we translate, 'Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving, sing praise upon the harp unto our God;' in the Hebrew it is ענו, Answer unto the Lord in thanksgiving. And in Isa. xxvii. 2, 'In that day sing ye unto her,' the Hebrew is, Answer ye unto her. In Numb. xxi. 17, 'Spring up, O well, sing ye unto it,' Heb. Answer unto it. So also in Exod. xxxii. 18, and other places.'[2]

But we possess decisive evidence, that the custom of responsive singing was in use among the Jews at an early age, in 1 Sam. xviii. 7, when the women came forth to meet Saul after the slaughter of the Philistines, 'singing and dancing with tabrets, and joy, and instruments of music. And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.' And a still more ancient example presents itself in the song of Moses and the Israelites after the passage of the Red Sea. At its close it is said, 'And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.'[3]

[1] Ezra iii. 11. [2] Mede's Diatribæ, p. 180.

[3] Exod. xv. 20, 21. The use of the alternate chant in the Temple worship, may further be gathered from the fact, that this 'song of

Strong presumptive proof have we therefore, that the early Christians adopted their antiphonal style of singing from the ancient practices of the Jews. Still it is natural to suppose that the Gentile or Grecian converts would seek to engraft upon the Hebrew chant, modulations endeared to them alike by taste and association. The Greeks, though they at first confined their music to religious purposes, latterly branched out into a wider range, which was greatly extended by their love for theatrical exhibitions. Thus the converts from Paganism soon shewed a disposition to adopt a more liberal style of Church music; but as it seemed to originate a worldly spirit, the Fathers inveighed against the innovations, and science was partially checked. Yet even under the most favourable circumstances, such was probably the ecclesiastical music of the first centuries, that it could hardly have been understood or endured in the present day. Whether it received any material improvement from the admixture of Pagan melodies,

Moses,' thus expressly said to be written for two sets of performers, 'responsive to each other's note,' was actually sung every Sabbath-day at the time of the evening sacrifice; and doubtless, in the style in which it was originally composed. That their Temple chanting also resembled our's as well in its simplicity, as in its antiphonal arrangement, may be argued from the number of Psalms introduced into one service, which could not possibly have been performed with our choral repetitions and involutions. Thus, besides the song of victory, were chanted in the Sabbath services, Psalm xcii. and the song of Moses in Deut. xxxii. which latter was divided into six parts, and thus completed in six Sabbaths. At the Passover they sang Psalm cxiii.—cxviii. inclusive, which was termed the lesser Hallelujah, and which was probably *the hymn* sung by our Lord and his Apostles, Matth. xxvi. 30. It is not known what Psalms composed the greater Hallelujah. Besides these, the Levites sang fifteen psalms following Psalm cxix. one upon each of the fifteen steps ascending from the women's court to the men's, at the gate of Nicanor—and from thence these psalms were termed songs of ascensions, degrees, or steps. The time thus occupied must have required great simplicity in chanting. See Bedford's Temple Musick, pp. 21, 53. Also an Article in Quart. Rev. xxxviii. pp. 20, 21, both quoting from Lightfoot.

may reasonably be doubted, when there are taken into the account, the low state of the music of the Greeks, the rude nature of their instruments, and the defects of their systems, so clogged with incumbrances, that it required seven years' practice, to become in any degree qualified to play upon the flute.

But whatever was the exact merit of the early chant of which we possess no specimens, we know that it subserved, and that in a high degree, spiritual edification. With it, as has been observed, our Lord probably solaced his soul before the scenes of his passion; for we cannot suppose that He gave a new character to musical science, since every circumstance of his life evinces that he came, not unnecessarily to rebuke early predilections and tastes, but to press them into the service of His kingdom. St. Augustine describes the rich consolation, which it continued to dispense to the children of God. When after his conversion, he entered the church at Milan, where St. Ambrose had introduced the eastern manner of chanting, he says, 'The voices flowed in at my ears: truth was distilled in my heart; and the affection of piety overflowed in sweet tears of joy.' [1]

The history of the origin of the chant has had a different direction given to it, by the narration of the ecclesiastical historian, Socrates. He ascribes it to Ignatius the martyr, who was cotemporary with the Apostles. Entranced in vision, he is related to have heard the choirs in heaven, chanting the praises of the Triune God, by singing alternate hymns—that he thence proposed the custom to the Eastern Christians for imitation, 'dividing the singers into two bands or choirs, placed in different sides

[1] Milner's Church History, Vol. II. p. 197. Burney's Hist. Mus. Vol. II. p. 6.

of the church; a practice which soon prevailed in every place where Christianity was established.'[1]

This account, however, is controverted, according to Hooker, who briefly considers the question. 'Theodoret draweth the original of it from Antioch, ascribing the invention to Flavian and Diodore. Against both Socrates and Theodoret, Platina is brought as a witness, that Damasus, bishop of Rome, began it in his time. This may be true of the Latin church. And therefore the eldest of that church, which maketh any mention thereof is St. Ambrose, cotemporary with Damasus. Among the Grecians, St. Basil having brought it into his church before they of Neo-Cæsarea used it, Sabellius the heretic, and Marcellus, took occasion thereat to incense the churches against him, as being an author of new devices in the service of God. Whereupon to avoid the opinion of novelty and singularity, he allegeth for that he himself did, the example of the churches of Egypt, Libya, Thebes, Palestina, the Arabians, Phœnicians, Syrians, Mesopotamians, and in a manner all that reverenced the custom of singing psalms together. If the Syrians had it then before Basil, Antioch the mother-church of those parts must needs have used it before Basil, and consequently before Damasus. The question is then, how long before, and whether so long that Ignatius, or as ancient as Ignatius, may be probably thought the first inventors. Ignatius, in Trajan's days suffered martyrdom. And of the churches in Pontus and Bithynia, to Trajan the Emperor, his own vicegerent then affirmeth, that the only crime he knew of them was, they used to meet together at a certain day, and to praise Christ with hymns as a

[1] Burney's Hist. Mus. Vol. II. p. 10.

God, 'secum invicem,' one to another amongst themselves. Which, for any thing we know to the contrary, might be the self-same form which Philo Judæus expresseth, declaring how the Essenes were accustomed with hymns and psalms to honour God, sometime all exalting their voices together in one, and sometime one part answering another, wherein, as he thought, they swerved not much from the pattern of Moses and Miriam. Whether Ignatius did at any time hear the angels praising God after that sort or no, what matter is it? If Ignatius did not, yet one which must be with us of greater authority did. 'I saw the Lord,' saith the prophet Isaiah, 'on a high throne—the seraphim stood upon it; one cried to another saying: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, the whole world is full of His glory.'[1]

Thus Hooker is content to allow his opponents the benefit of their doubts, in order to draw their attention, not alone to mere human tradition, which is open to cavil, but to the scriptural authority of the usages of heaven. Such then, if it were not the fashion of the present day to put into force the whole machinery of human interpretation to twist and torture the plain letter from its original meaning,

[1] Isaiah vi. 1—3. Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, Book V. Sect. 39. In the same manner St. John describes the saints in heaven as singing the song of Moses, in allusion evidently to the Sabbath-song already referred to, as composed for the alternate chant. They 'having gained the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God,' and raise their responsive thanksgivings in the commencement of their Sabbath of everlasting rest. Rev. xv. 2—4. This was also probably the mode in which the songs mentioned in Rev. vii. 9—12; xix. 1—6. were sung. In the last it is expressly declared, that a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise ye the Lord, and was responded to by the voice of a great multitude, saying, (or singing, for the words are used synonimously) 'Alleluia: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.' See Bedford's Temple Musick, p. 22.

if it happens to militate against some preconceived opinion, would, it might be supposed, suffice to stop the mouths of gainsayers, and establish the divine character of the alternate chant, and the consequent propriety of its adoption in our devotional services. It is difficult to conceive stronger authority for the admission of any of the circumstantials of Christian faith than is here produced in support of the neglected chant. And if any determine still to disregard the scriptural account of its celestial use, and explain away passages, like the one quoted, by those arts of human reasoning, which convert a substance into a shadow, a fact into a figure, a thing real into a nonentity—let them respect the hoar hairs of antiquity, which are in many points to it a crown of glory. We have traced the chant back to within a few centuries of the flood, through all the gradations of religious worship under the present and former dispensation, whether Christian or Jewish, Church, Temple, or Tabernacle; we ask therefore some slight caution before an unlimited condemnation. 'For,' as Hooker observes, 'whosoever were the author, whatsoever the time, whensoever the example of beginning this custom in the church of Christ; sith we are wont to suspect things only before trial, and afterward either to approve them as good, or if we find them evil accordingly to judge of them; their counsel must needs seem very unseasonable, who advise men now to suspect that wherewith the world hath had, by their own account, twelve hundred years' acquaintance and upwards, enough to take away suspicion and jealousy. Men know by this time, if ever they will know, whether it be good or evil which hath been so long retained.'[1]

[1] Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, Book V. Sect. 39.

The progress of chanting is so nearly connected with the general history of church-music, that few observations need be added to bring it down to our own time. Before the invention of counterpoint, and the consequent introduction of more varied and intricate harmonies, ecclesiastical music consisted almost exclusively of the chant. The newly imported melody of St. Ambrose was a chant—the Canto Fermo of Gregory was a chant; and it was not till the adoption of elaborate harmonies, that it yielded precedence to the fuller chorale or bolder anthem. Indeed, as we have already seen, it was long after the invention of counterpoint, that music ventured to step beyond the grave and solemn descant, which custom had familiarized, and antiquity rendered venerable. So long, however, as it was left mainly to the management of the priests and immediate officers of the church, it retained its hold upon the ecclesiastical services.

But when the Reformation had accustomed men to look with more boldness upon old institutions, and to question their character, no part of the Romish ritual escaped a most rigid scrutinization. The Genevan school, with an unhappy lack of discretion, hesitated not to stamp Ichabod upon many a noble and elevating rite, which had nourished and cheered the soundest piety in the earliest times. The same forbidding scowl with which it rebuked from its presence the order of episcopacy, sanctioned (the enemies themselves being judges) by the practice of the early ages of Christianity, it bent upon the most spirited and generous parts of the Romish service. Heresy had found its way into the ancient liturgy—it must therefore be altogether abandoned! Instrumental music had been the handmaid of profane and godless mummery—it must be cast aside as an un-

clean thing! And, upon the same principle, the lively and harmonious chant, having lent its aid to make idolatry palatable, was considered profaned beyond all hope of redemption; as if the destruction of any of the divine gifts actually carried vengeance upon the inanimate things themselves, instead of reverting upon the destroyers. There is hardly existent a more melancholy proof of human folly, than such indiscriminating censure, sweeping away the enjoyment with its abuse, and blocking up one entrance after the other, through which heavenly food might yet be imparted to the famished spirit. It pleased God, however, to endue the English Reformers with great natural gifts and largeness of soul. They were men, whose piety was commensurate only with their wisdom; and, being accustomed from their high and responsible situations in the kingdom, to examine accurately the bearings of questions of national concern, they seem to have been exempt from those petty prejudices which struggle in the minds of little men, when called suddenly to the contemplation of subjects of high and extensive import. Hence, when the question of reformation came before them, what did they seek to reform? Not the shape of the cap or gown—not the ancient use of the surplice—not the introduction of instrumental, nor the mode of vocal music,—not in short the bare external rites themselves, but the abuse of them. Gowns and surplices were retained; but their supposed sanctity was dislodged from them, and their character greatly simplified—the organ was still the guide of the voice, and the chant the mode of its expression; but the sentiment was purged; and thus, without mutilating one cornice, or destroying one capital of the sacred pillars of the edifice which had been so long permitted to remain in mouldering obscurity, they

merely directed the beams of the Sun of Truth to shine upon it; and bowed before the purifying wind of persecution which blew around it, when the mist of ages shrivelled up like a scroll, it rose dilating in its own magnitude, and stood forth confessed the mother of the Protestant churches. Others, after the storm had passed away, viewing their own disfigured structures emerging from the darkness, their beauty defaced, and in some instances, their very foundations shaken, were fain to admit that symmetry is power, and that in permitting a righteous indignation to overstep discretion, they had lost, with the very attainment of their object, much that was lovely and of good report.

The Book of Common Prayer, which abounds in specimens of the alternate chant, affords the most convincing evidence of the wisdom of our Reformers. All those motives which burned in the breasts of a Knox or a Calvin influenced them. Their zeal against idolatry was not less decisive—their sufferings not less intense. They, like the apostles, had to endure 'the spoiling of all things,' even to the loss of life itself. If then any had a right to talk of holy indignation and zeal, it were they! And yet how temperate an use did they make of their victory, bloody and hard-earned as it was, compared with the Scotch or Swiss Reformers. They had the cockatrice in their grasp as well as these; but they were content to crush it without destroying the eggs among which it may chance to have lain. They designed not the gratification of a temporary triumph, but their country's final good; and yearning in love even to their enemies, they desired not, with needless severity, to disgust and alienate them from the truth, but sought to win them to Christ by showing them, how far they might combine their prejudices in non-

essentials, with the entire subjection of the heart to all the essential doctrines of a Saviour's cross and a Saviour's crown. In this attempt they were greatly aided by the very character of the Romish discipline and liturgy. Dreadful and damnatory as are the delusions which blind that church, they are superadded delusions. Their ecclesiastical order was apostolic; but the power and character of the order were perverted, as well as its divisions needlessly multiplied. Their liturgy was, mainly, in the very words of the church in her purest and best days; but additional prayers and passages, pestilent and heterodox in their character, were added. What therefore more simple than to raise the kernel, and permit the husks to fall off from it? How natural and how efficacious was this unsophisticated method may be seen in the character of the liturgy, purged as it now is from Romish defilement. Even strangers have awarded it this high commendation, that 'the evangelical purity of its sentiments, the chastised fervour of its devotion, and the majestic simplicity of its language have combined to place it in the very first rank of uninspired compositions.'[1] And yet this beautiful liturgy so applauded, is but the liturgy of the Romish church, not entirely re-modeled, but purified and restored to its original character. That the Reformers saved themselves much needless labour and hot contention by this generous and large-minded system of reform, is sufficiently attested by the angry disputes about trifles, which marked the conduct of others, who were behind none in their love for the cause of truth, and their boldness in withstanding error.

By a comparison of the specimens of the alternate

[1] Rev. Robert Hall. Speech at a Bible Meeting.

chant which abound in our Liturgy, with the choral practices of the Jews and early Christians, the mind is struck with the numerous coincidences existing between them—all demonstrative of the high regard paid to antiquity, and the care with which its monuments have been preserved. The cathedral chanting of the Church of England possesses almost every characteristic of the Jewish music; and varies only in its enriching the meagre simplicity of the ancient mode, from the abounding stores of modern harmonies. It may not be uninteresting to enumerate a few instances of general resemblance.

1. In the Temple service, there were two precentors, one for each band of singers, who were appointed to commence, and direct the others. Such was Chenaniah, of whom it is said, that 'he instructed about the song, because he was skilful;'[1] and both precentors are further mentioned by Nehemiah: 'Mattaniah—the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer; and Bakbukiah, the second among his brethren.'[2] It may be gathered from Nehemiah, that this was also the case before the captivity, since he informs us, 'that in the days of David and Asaph, of old, there were chief of the singers,' (ראשי המשוררים perhaps in the Dual Number to denote two) 'and songs of praise and thanksgiving to God.'[3] Thus also Moses, in his song of deliverance, seems to have been the precentor to the men, and Miriam to the women. Philo relates of the Essenes, that 'after the expounding of the law, one, being the first or chief, rising up, sings an Hymn to God, which he performs with various turnings and windings of the voice; and the rest do imitate their chief in a decent order: every one listening attentively or quietly,

[1] 1 Chron. xv. 22, 27. [2] Neh. xi. 17.
[3] Neh. xii. 46.

except at the close of all; for then they all lift up their voices without distinction of sex.'[1]

2. They seem to have had not only singing-men, but singing-boys. For the word translated sons, בנים, is variously applied in all Eastern languages. These sons formed part of the singers; and as in the four and twenty orders, the chief, his sons and brethren were always twelve—the number must occasionally have varied, had they been literally his sons. It is therefore probable, that the singing-boys might be termed the sons of the Precentor, in the same manner as the singing-men are termed his brethren.

3. 'The singers were generally Levites, and stood in the desks while they sang; and the singing-boys,' (as Bedford supposes) 'stood directly under them.'

4. The singers and boys were divided into two bands, standing opposite each other. Their places were determined by lot—'ward against ward, as well the small as the great, the teacher as the scholar.'[2] They were also clothed in white linen. So after the captivity, it is stated, that 'there were the chief of the Levites, Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua the son of Kadmiel, with their brethren over against them, to praise and to give thanks, according to the commandment of David the man of God, ward over against ward.'[3]

5. They answered one another; 'and therefore,' as Bedford says, 'it is very probable, that one side sung one verse of a psalm, and the other side sung the other.' We have already ascertained the antiquity of this practice; and beside the Psalter-psalms, 'some footsteps of the responsorial custom remain among us in those short versicles of Liturgy, being

[1] De Vita Contemplativa. [2] 1 Chron. xxv. 8.
[3] Neh. xii. 24.

sentences taken out of the Psalms, where the priest says or sings the first half, and the people answer the latter; quasi τα ἀκροτελεύτια. As for example, in that taken out of the Fifty-first Psalm, the priest says, 'O Lord, open thou our lips;' the people, or chorus, answer, 'And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.'[1] Besides many others which will immediately occur to the reader's recollection.

6. It may be added, that the singers divided each Psalm into three parts, making long pauses, during which the trumpets sounded, and the people worshipped; to which, the symphonies and other instrumental movements in our anthems, may bear some analogy.[2]

Thus we see a considerable resemblance between the services of the Jews, and our Cathedral worship. 'If they had their instrumental, as well as vocal music—so have we. If their singers stood in the desks, and the boys stood directly under them, all clothed in white linen—so is it with us. If they had their precentor to begin their tunes, and their psalms—so have we. If they had singers who were Levites, or might be of another tribe—we have also some which are ordained, and some in a lay capacity. If they answered each other in singing, or sang by turns—so do we. If they had various ways of singing—so have we. And, lest all this should not be sufficient, we have an anthem, where the composer may exercise either art or fancy in a single part, or in a concert. And thus our Cathedrals are the only places in England, which have collected the fragments of antiquity, in relation to Church Music, that nothing might be lost; and at the same time left a skilful artist wholly at liberty, to make

[1] Mede's Diatribæ, p. 179.
[2] Bedford's Temple Musick, pp. 72—87.

the utmost improvements of which the art is capable.' [1]

It has been already stated, that the Chant is a sort of intermediate link between the Psalm-tune and the Anthem. It is better adapted for congregational singing than the latter, and less so than the former. Unlike the Anthem, it never perils the meaning of a sentence upon verbal or clausal repetitions; and from its construction, it more happily combines vocal and rhythmical inflexions than in the regular stalk of the Chorale 'o'er rough and smooth.' It requires, however, some degree of lightness of utterance, and flexibility of modulation, and therefore, for general use, yields precedence to the Psalm-tune, which, from its very defect, better humours the voice of an undisciplined multitude. Thus the full exercise of the Chant is confined to Cathedrals, though it is occasionally admitted into parish churches. The English seem peculiarly to have studied this species of composition, and in some cases with singular felicity; for while their Anthems have often an appearance of heaviness and prosy science, the Chant assumes a liveliness, and raciness of character, which accord well with the nature of the composition, and the sentiment of which it is the organ. Its very perfection is to be met with in our Cathedral Churches. Nothing can be more interesting than this part of the service. Two bands or companies of boys, clad in white raiment, to denote the sanctity of their office, and the inward purity which ought to attend it, stand opposite each other; and, as the Angels are represented in Heaven, take up alternately the parts of the chant, mingling their clear and rich voices with the loud swell of the organ; while,

[1] Bedford's Temple Musick, pp. 90, 91.

to the listener, the sound seems to float between the high-arched roof and the small choir, like a cloud of adoration.

In the full Cathedral service, the whole Litany is thus chanted, the Prayers by the Chaplain, and the responses by the choir. A voiceless clergy affords perhaps the best reason, why the practice has not extended to our parochial churches. But as auxiliaries to this defect, there are many prejudices against cathedral chanting, which are worthy of examination. It has been objected, that the tone of voice is unedifying, and calculated to distract attention—that the Litany, composed as it is of invocations, confessions, and general petitions, and expressive of mournful feelings, possesses not a musical character.

Now those who deny that the chant may be a means of edification, merely from the tone in which it is recited, would undoubtedly appeal to their own experience, and thus deem their arguments irrefragable. There is however such a thing as a limited experience, and an unsound inference deduced from it. The individuals most clamorous in their condemnation of this ancient custom are either dissenters, who may be supposed careless to disguise their contempt of a church practice, or churchmen, whose opportunities for becoming acquainted with its real nature have been slight, and who have a talent at deducing summary conclusions from slender premises. An individual, accustomed all his life to hear the prayers read in his parish church, finds himself some morning in a city, with a few hours at his command, before he pursues his journey. He saunters to the Cathedral, which is naturally the object most attractive to any person of taste. As he approaches, he perceives by the distant roll of the organ, that he is in time for a portion of the morn-

ing service. He enters; and, standing at the door of the screen hears the Litany chanted by the Chaplains and clerks. It has an air of novelty—he does not like it—he thinks it indevotional—he has never heard any thing of the kind before—he wonders how people can endure it—he bundles together his packages, and upon his return home, instills into the minds of his children certain positions derived from his own experience—that chanting the Cathedral service is an incongruous mummery, because *he* did not understand it,—and that it never could subserve edification, because *he* was not edified. In the meantime, while this busy slander is spreading, and greedily swallowed as the fruit of experience, there are others, unendowed perhaps with musical taste, but accustomed to attend the Cathedral service, not *once* upon an occasion, but statedly, or even daily, who acknowledge that chanting, so far from distracting attention, enhances greatly their spiritual enjoyment. Whether of the characters are more deserving of attention on the score of experience? We all know the force of sheer prejudice. 'Music is indeed an universal language; but it has its dialects; and the mode of expression, which may be most acceptable and intelligible, where custom has familiarized it, might, to strangers, be not only less touching and beautiful, but frequently awkward and even offensive.'[1] Who then, in a case of this kind, where judgment is demanded on a most ancient rite, would permit prejudice to prevail as an accuser?

'To sing psalms artificially, says Athanasius, is not to make a shew of cunning musicke, but an argument that the cogitations of our mindes do aptly agree with our musicke, and that reading, which

[1] Preface to the Christian Psalmist.

observeth the lawe of feete and numbers, is a signe of a sober and quiet affection in the minde.'[1]

If the objection against the matter be urged,—by what authority, it may be asked, is the language of invocation or request pronounced unsuited to music? Not by the authority of nature; for the modulations of natural sounds, and the tones of many instruments frequently run into mournful and supplicatory keys. Not by the authority of art, as much the gift of God as nature; for the tunes of all instruments can be so changed and applied, that the sounds of joyous rapture may on the moment be 'turned into the voice of them that weep.' Not by the authority of scripture, which abounds in mournful psalms, arranged in their whole structure as musical compositions;—nor yet by the authority of custom, whether ecclesiastical,—the services of the church being at all times rich in penitential psalms; or exclusive,—not a dissenting hymn-book existing without supplicatory and mournful hymns. It is difficult therefore to conceive a character so heterogeneous, that his experience should not rebuke his scruples.

It has been further objected to liturgical chanting, that it is occasionally performed by lay persons, of whom a great part of our choirs are composed. In this case however 'the voice of the singer is to be considered not as of a priest, but precentor; *vox præcurrens*, going before and leading on the congregation: which in general confessions, as well as litanies has ever been allowed.'[2] Thus the old rubrick directed the confession in the communion office to be 'said either by one of the communicants in the name of the rest, or else by the minister himself;' the

[1] Quoted by the author of 'Praise of Musicke', p. 122.
[2] Rationale on Cathedral Worship by Dr. Bisse, p. 42.

priest thus becoming one of the people. Moreover in the litany, each several petition, though divided between the priest and people, or chanter and choir, forms in effect one, 'so that it imports not which begins or which ends.'[1]

'The uniform tenor of pronunciation used in the cathedral service,' is very generally opposed by those to whom the practice is novel. It is worth while, therefore, to hear Dr. Bisse's three reasons for the custom.

1. 'Necessity. For the great extent, and amplitude of our cathedral churches, being greater than that of Solomon's temple, which was yet called a 'palace for the Lord God,' obliges the voice of him that officiates therein to put forth its strength. For the extent of the voice must bear a proportion to that of the house, so as to be heard throughout the congregation: which would be impracticable, were the reader allowed to alter it by variable cadences. For to let down the voice, would be to lose it through the vastness of the sanctuary. Whereas, in chanting, the voice is enabled to be much stronger, as well as more melodious. Hence the rubrick, in which it is appointed, that 'the lessons with the epistles and gospels, should be sung in a plain tune in choirs and places where they sing.' Why? The preamble of the rubrick is 'to the end that the people may the better hear.'

2. 'Uniformity. For in choirs, as the voice of the priest keeps one uniform tenor, so the voices of the congregation, of young and old, though of different pitch and elevation, are obliged, at the public answers of Amen and other responsals, to conform to it, so as to keep the same tenor or tone, or to be in unisons with it; which in the language, not of harmony only,

[1] Ibid. pp. 42, 43.

but of scripture itself, is said 'to be as one,' because 'making one sound to be heard' in the temple. To cover the disagreement of voices in parish churches, the people are enjoined to answer in Amen and responses, only with an humble voice; there being one appointed to perform the same parts, with a more audible, distinct pronunciation. Surely it was in choirs chiefly, that the description of St. Jerome could be verified, that the pronouncing the Amen resembled the sound of thunder.'[1]

3. To prevent the imperfections of pronouncing in the reader, as well as to cover the disagreements of voice in the congregation. 'To read well, by placing the due emphasis upon words, varying the voice with the signification of each, poising it with the importance of that signification, exalting it with the most material and expressive, remitting it with the ornamental and expletive,—to observe the length, order, and form of sentences in a period, and to distinguish and terminate them by proper rests and cadences; these, with other decencies of pronouncing, require in readers no common learning and judgment, as well as happiness of voice and justness of ear. Talents which meet but in few, or can be expected to meet. And when they do, they cannot be well executed or observed by the reader in places where they sing, through the usual greatness of the house, wherein rather strength of voice is required, than proprieties to be expected.' Hence the injunction afore cited, to chant the lessons, epistles and gospels. At the restoration, however, this rubric was cancelled for reasons unknown, as the church-commissioners replied to the Presbyterians: 'The rubrick directs only such singing, as is after the manner of distinct

[1] Ad similitudinem cœlestis tonitrui *Amen* populus reboat. Hieron in II. Prœm. Com. in Gal.

reading: and as we have never heard of any inconvenience thereby, we therefore conceive this demand to be needless.'[1]

Certain higher reasons for the practice are thus given by the above author.

1. It is emblematic of the delight, which Christians have in the law of God, which prompts them to make 'his statutes their song in the house of their pilgrimage.'

2. 'It bespeaks the cheerfulness of our Christian profession, as contrasted with that of the Gentiles. The latter used to cover their heads and faces at their public worship. The primitive Christians on the other hand 'prayed with their open hands, protesting their innocency, and by their open countenance professing they were not ashamed.'[2] Thus, as by the openness of demeanour, so by the cheerfulness of voice testified in singing their prayers, they declared, that they did not worship 'as men without hope,' like the Gentiles, whose sacrifices were attended with dejection and despondency, with loud cryings and howlings.'

3. 'It gives to divine worship a greater dignity, by separating it more from all actions and interlocutions that are common and familiar. Chanting being a degree and advance in dignity above the distinct reading or saying used in the church, as that is, and ought ever to be, above that manner of reading or speaking, which passes in common conversation among men.'

4. 'It is more efficacious to awaken the attention, to stir up the affections, and to edify the understanding, than plain reading—which effects, as they are

[1] Rationale, pp. 33—38.

[2] Manibus expansis, quia innocuis; capite nudo, quia non erubescimus.

wrought by the melody of the voice principally, so not a little by the very strength and loudness of it, which is known to have force, and attract the hearers. Now the voice may be more raised, extended, and exerted in chanting than is practicable in speaking. Yet some, through unskilfulness in elocution, borrow a corrupt imitation of this manner to strengthen their utterance in their assemblies, and assume a tone in their praying and preaching; not considering, that in chanting, though this be natural and pleases, yet in speaking it becomes affected and offends; and that chanting, misunderstood and misapplied, falls under the appellation and censure of canting. So unhappily blind is prejudice, as to condemn that manner in our worship, when it is in perfection; and yet in their own, to take up with its corruption.'[1]

It is of importance, however, when the litany is chanted, to consult distinctness and equality of pronunciation no less than propriety of melody. Hence a former rubrick enjoined, that 'it should be sung in a plain tune, after the manner of distinct reading.' And to the same effect the Injunctions, Eliz. 42, direct 'that there be a modest and distinct song so used through all the parts of the Common Prayer, that the same may be as plainly understood, as if it were read without singing.' 'The end proposed in both is the edification of the people, for which is recommended by the one *a plain*, by the other *a modest* chanting, as being more distinct, rather than if accompanied with much modulation of voice, that thus, in the language

[1] Rationale, pp. 28—31. This spurious chanting, or as Dr. Bisse terms it, canting, though a mean substitute for the true, may serve in some respects to show how deeply music is engrained in the human mind. The American divine, Jonathan Edwards, gives a singular proof of this in his own practice. 'While engaged in religious exercises, it always seemed natural to me to *sing*, or *chant* forth my meditations; or to speak my thoughts in soliloquies *with a singing voice*.'—Life prefixed to his works.

of St. Athanasius, it might be 'vicinior pronuncianti quam canenti.'[1]

'The inflexion of voice at the end of each petition is both necessary and becoming—becoming, because being placed upon that constant close, 'through Jesus Christ our Lord,' or the like, it is a proper testimony that we 'rejoice in God our Saviour'—necessary, because it serves as a public sign or warning to the choir, to join in the approaching Amen.'[2]

But, independent of these reasons in favour of Liturgical chanting, 'it had been sufficient to have alleged, that it was and is the usage,—usage being allowed to give the rules and forms to all language, to assign and appropriate different dialects and pronunciations, accommodated to different places and subjects, as consecrated or common, sacred or profane. To those, therefore, who demand, why and by what authority the service is chanted in our cathedral and collegiate choirs, the reply is, just by the very same, that it is *said* in our parish Churches. It has been and is the accustomed manner: and being accustomed, the better understood and accepted of by the people. And besides the unforeseen inconveniences which attend this, as other public innovations, an alteration in this custom visibly breaks in upon that outward concord and uniformity, which should eminently shine forth in these Mother Churches; and runs counter in some degree to the design of the Reformers, which was, to reduce 'that great diversity in singing after the manner of different Cathedrals into one use, by bringing up herein a new diversity.' For what *they* themselves said of ceremonies may be justly applied to this usage: that 'when the old may be well used, then men cannot reasonably reprove

[1] Rationale, pp. 31, 32. [2] Ibid. p. 53.

the old, only for its age: but ought rather to have reverence unto it for its antiquity: if they will declare themselves more studious of unity and concord, than of innovations and new-fangledness, which (as much as may be with the true setting forth of Christ's religion) is always to be eschewed.'[1]

Shall then, as Hooker asks, the frivolous objections made by some to the chant, 'enforce us to banish a thing, which all Christian Churches in the world have received; a thing which so many ages have held; a thing which the most approved councils and laws have so oftentimes ratified; a thing which was never found to have any inconvenience in it; a thing which always heretofore the best men and wisest governors of God's people did think, they could never commend enough; a thing which, as Basil was persuaded, did both strengthen the meditation of those holy words which were uttered in that sort, and serve also to make attentive, and to raise up the hearts of men; a thing whereunto God's people of old did resort with hope and thirst, that thereby especially their souls might be edified; a thing which filleth the mind with comfort and heavenly delight, stirreth up fragrant desires and affections correspondent unto that which the words contain; allayeth all kind of base and earthly cogitations, banisheth and driveth away those evil secret suggestions, which our invisible enemy is always apt to minister, watereth the heart to the end it may fructify, maketh the virtuous in trouble full of magnanimity and courage, serveth as a most approved remedy against all doleful and heavy accidents which befal men in this present life. To conclude, so fitly accordeth with the apostle's own exhortation, 'Speak

[1] Preface to the Book of Common Prayer Rationale, pp. 47, 48.

to yourselves in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, making melody and singing to the Lord in your hearts,' that surely there is more cause to fear lest the want thereof be a maim, than the use a blemish to the service of God. It is not our meaning, that what we attribute unto the Psalms, should be thought to depend altogether on that only form of singing or reading them by course, as with us the manner is; but the end of our speech is to shew that because the fathers of the Church, with whom the self-same custom was so many ages ago in use, have uttered all these things concerning the fruit which the Church of God did then reap, observing that and no other form, it may be justly avouched, that we ourselves retaining it, and besides it also, the other more newly and not unfruitfully devised, do neither want that good which the latter invention can afford, nor lose any thing of that, for which the ancients so oft and so highly commend the former. Let novelty therefore in this give over endless contradictions, and let ancient custom prevail.'[1]

Before the Reformation, and the introduction of Psalmody consequent thereupon, parish churches followed the customs of Cathedrals 'some of Salisbury, some of Hereford, others of Lincoln &c. and it seems to have been the intention of the Reformers to bring all to one certain use, if not of chanting, yet of saying, or reading the service in one equable unvaried tone, which the Priest (if unskilled, as many were in those days) could better perform, and the people better hear.'[2] As this did not succeed, and is not likely ever again to be attempted, it may remain a question whether it had been for edification. The partial introduction of the chant has however ob-

[1] Eccl. Pol. Book V. sect. 39. [2] Rationale, p. 46.

tained in many parochial churches, without drawing upon the musical resources of the clergy. It may not therefore be uninteresting to investigate the musical claims of the several portions of the service, to which it is thus occasionally applied.

I. The Introductory Sentences.

Though it is not exactly specified in the Rubrick, that these sentences may be sung by a choir or congregation, but rather 'read with a loud voice by the minister', yet those who may reconcile their minds to this slight irregularity, cannot but be pleased with the custom. With the exception of two passages, Joel ii. 13. Matth. iii. 2. the clergyman speaks, not so much in his character of priest, as of one of the people. The language is that of humble invitation, not of injunction. Ere he prostrates himself before the mercy seat, he stands on a level with his brethren, and desires to unite with them in their humble confession to Almighty God.' There can therefore be no impropriety in committing the invitation to the choir, or even to the congregation itself. We have already referred to the beautiful provision made by the Church, that all her children should join vocally in much of the service. Its advantages are evident. It excites a peculiar interest in the several devotional offices, and a more distinct self-appropriation of their language to the soul. It induces each individual to feel himself more intimately a member of the great congregation, as well in the violations of the law, as in the hopes of the gospel, and thus prepares him for the solemn address in which he is encouraged to draw nigh 'with a pure heart and humble voice unto the throne of the heavenly grace.'

If we then admit, that the chant may be appropriately applied to this part of the service, the next point to ascertain, is its most befitting character.

This must evidently be determined by its designed application, whether congregational, or choral. If the former, it should assume the simplest and least refined appearance of the chant. Each word ought to have its distinct note. Its divisions should be well marked, and its texture interwoven with no rapid movements, shakes, turns, and other ornaments. Free from bold and scientific inversions, it should combine, like the Psalm-tune, smoothness of measure with a rich and comprehensive harmony. If the latter, it might indulge in a bolder and more comprehensive range, yet restrained by the sanctity of its design. Verbal repetitions, if not utterly excluded, should be admitted sparingly, and in strict conformity with the spirit and sense of the passage. The text ought never to be made a mere groundwork for ingenious flourishes. The truth should be continually impressed on the mind, that harmony is but an auxiliary; and that, if it once draws aside the attention from the words to admire the dexterity of the execution, or the ingenuity of the composition, it becomes a curse instead of a blessing. Hence the necessity of such an accompaniment, as may enable those who cannot analyse its musical beauties to follow it mentally, and feel its adaptation to the words, or rather to the idea conveyed by the words.

II. The Psalms.

In Cathedral Churches, as the versicles and responses are supported solely by the human voice, the notice of the daily Psalms gives the first signal for the organ to roll forth its accompaniment. The chant, thus by distinction called the accompanied chant, is commonly applied without variation to the successive Psalms for the day. As however the Psalter follows the biblical arrangement, it is plain,

that by this rigid uniformity, the distinction between penitence and joy is not properly preserved. Hence in some places this voluntary fetter has been cast aside, and a variety of minor and major chants admitted, in conformity however to the established rules of modulation. Some major chants allow of being changed into a minor key, and the transition is both simple and affecting. A spirited and lively chant is also occasionally introduced with good effect into the body of a Psalm, where there occurs a sudden change from lamentation to thanksgiving, or where there is a continually recurring repetition of some joyous burden.[1]

It may seem singular that the custom of chanting the Psalms which, like all ancient lyrics, were originally composed for music, should be so generally confined to Cathedrals. Who, that is at all susceptible of musical effect, would compare the bare reading of Psalm xxix., in which the description of the Divine power comes forth, glowing in all the freshness and majesty of present inspiration, with the chanting the same Psalm by the rich voices of antiphonal choirs, sustained by the loud tones of a Cathedral organ? Nor let any one despise the effect as merely influencing the feelings. How are the spiritual gifts of God bestowed upon man? By an imperceptible influence, or by working upon the affections? Can the two great commandments of the law, love to God, and love to the neighbour, be fulfilled without feeling? If then feelings are under divine influence, is not that mode which most deeply impresses upon those feelings, the truth and majesty of the divine word, the best under God's blessing for the transmission of His spirit? If the feelings

[1] Psalm cvii. affords an instance.

be not permanent, that is no fault of the medium of communication, but of the man.

Yet, whatever might be the advantages, many causes operate against the general application of the chant to the Psalms. First, it would be difficult in most cases, to preserve its antiphonal character, without which much of its beauty were lost. Again, simple as is its structure, it does not readily accommodate itself to the united voices of the people. The slow moving-mass is unequal to keep pace with the rapid articulation of the first part of the clause. This natural swiftness indeed is needlessly increased by the doggedness, with which many organists confine the chant to the same given time, without making allowance for a diversity in the length of sentences. The extension of some clauses is unquestionably an evil; but since, unless the entire Psalter was newly arranged, it is irremediable, it remains for the organist rather to shackle the chant itself with the inconvenience, than oblige the singers to crowd into its compass too great a number of words to admit of their being understood, or even distinctly pronounced. Considered as a musical composition, the chant ought unquestionably to have its stated measure, free from variation—but the inequality of the verses is a sufficient apology for any organist, while he rides not blindly up-hill and down-hill at the same furious rate. 'It is by no means necessary,' says a professional musician, 'that the words be gabbled over as some scandalously abuse them, and thus bring discredit upon the method itself. All the words should be pronounced distinctly, with but little more celerity than ordinary speech. The organist is bound to hold out or contract the notes according to the number of syllables, till he hears them orderly pronounced, and then, and not till then, to proceed,

somewhat briskly or otherwise, according to the spirit of the language.'[1]

The chant however is necessarily more or less rapid, and in this respect, as in others already noted, corresponds with the Jewish method of singing. The word *chant* which occurs in Amos vi. 5, where there is an evident reference to the practices of David in the Temple service ' is in Heb. פּוֹרְטִים and comes from פרט a particle, ' a small matter.' And therefore in Musick the chanters did cut their notes short, as we do also in our chanting tunes, and made them small or little, not only like our quavers, but also like unto that of David.'[2] This celerity, demanding delicacy of tone as well as flexibility of utterance, precludes in a great measure the general use of the chant, except to short versicles or psalms which by frequent repetition may permit of a tolerably correct, if not an elegant execution. Besides that some further knowledge and practice than usually fall to the lot of a mixed congregation are requisite, to enable persons to mark accurately the exact syllable on which the measure changes to its concluding chords. The additional time also required to chant the Psalms might in some cases be attended with inconvenience, especially in the morning service already sufficiently extended. For these and similar reasons the practice has not generally obtained in our parochial churches.

Still as the minister in the daily service reads verse by verse alternately with the congregation, the antiphonal character of the chant is universally preserved. In some places the Gloria Patria is sung; in which the constant repetition of the same tune

[1] Mus. Mag. Vol. IV. p. 177.
[2] Bed. Temp. Musick, pp. 162, 163.

to the same words renders it easy for the congregation to unite.[1]

III. Te Deum Laudamus.

This magnificent Hymn is so clearly adapted in all its parts for music, that it is a subject of wonder, how any church, able to command a plain chant, can content itself with the comparative bald and inappropriate method of reading. It may be boldly said, that in this particular instance, half our churches do not 'praise God with the best member that they have.' How strange would it not sound if, instead of singing a metrical Psalm, the clergy and people should read antiphonally the several rhyming couplets of which it is composed! And although custom, and the rhymless form of the Te Deum deaden in some measure the conviction of absurdity; yet the whole style of the composition is so manifestly measured and musical, that it might be imagined, common taste as well as common sense would plead for its restoration, where practicable, to its original honours. The case is indeed almost remediless, in places where there is no organ or proper instrument to sustain the voice—but, under other circumstances, all the common objections above considered as applying with some force to the Psalms, are perfectly invalid as respects the Te Deum. The extension of time, what is it? At most, three or five minutes;

[1] In consequence of the general disuse into which the chant has fallen, complaints are frequently made of the inconvenience supposed to arise from retaining the musical point [:] which still continues to mark the Psalter verses. Grave advice has been given in many publications to remove these little 'rocks of offence.' Whether indeed they do actually confound the intellects of a congregation it is difficult to determine, but it is incorrect to assert that they are useless to the members of a choir, for however practised in chanting, without such signs, mistakes would be inevitable. In fact so necessary are they, that to reject them entirely, would be to reject the double chant. Perhaps however, some more distinctive mark as a double dash = would prevent the possibility of mistaking it for a point in reading.

and in many cases where the sermon exceeds an hour's length, there would be no actual sacrifice of spiritual benefit, if a few moments were kindly transferred to raise the Te Deum to its deserved rank in the public service of God. A plain chant repeated every Sabbath would soon afford the people opportunity to comprehend and facility to accompany it. If a more elaborate composition were preferred, it might still be rendered generally intelligible. And thus this noble Hymn would be restored to its proper rank, without the sacrifice of any one characteristic of the genuine chant.

The observations, respecting the most proper style of musical composition for the Introductory Sentences, apply here with equal force. The practice of transforming the Te Deum into a complete Anthem, with all its repetitions and involutions, its ornaments and rapid movements, if becoming in a Cathedral service, is unquestionably out of character in parish churches. The dread of such an elaborate performance is perhaps one reason, why this hymn is so generally read. And if in church matters there must be a contest between what is musical, and what is intelligible, no one could hesitate in his decision. In affairs of such moment, it is little less than profanation to permit sound, however melodious, to nullify sense. Highly needful is it therefore, that whatever musical accompaniment is applied, its connection with the words should be not only generally but minutely perceived. In this respect, as we shall afterwards have occasion to observe, the regular Anthem differs from this species of composition. The object of the Anthem is attained by the mere comprehension of the subject, —the feelings left to be acted upon by the general course of the Music without any knowledge of the detail—but here, where the Hymn consists of a

number of distinct, isolated sentences of praise and prayer, in each of which all are equally interested; if the congruity of sound and idea be not accurately discerned, the effect is lost, the mind is bewildered, and it may be said of a congregation, what Jehovah said of His people of old: 'Their works are nothing: their molten images are wind and confusion.'[1] An intricate and elaborate composition will never be *minutely* understood by the common uneducated class; and it were acting too much in the spirit of Popery, to treat them as if they had ears, but no souls. It may be questioned indeed whether any, however well skilled in music, are more edified, *cæteris paribus*, by the intricacies of science, than by plain unstudied simplicity. But there can be no question respecting the great body of the people, who are the poor of this world, to whom Christ peculiarly preached the Gospel, and whose edification ought therefore to be an object of especial concern. The musical garniture of the Te Deum should be of the simplest character; and, for this purpose, no style of composition can claim precedence over the plain chant, or a movement moulded upon such a form, where each word shall have its separate and well-defined note. If some complain that thus Music is gothicized, and driven back to the times of the Canto Fermo, let them judge for themselves whether intelligible common-place becomes not better a 'reasonable service,' than unintelligible science. 'I had rather,' says St. Paul, 'speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.'[2]

IV. The Canticles.

The Hymns which vary and succeed the Scripture

[1] Isaiah xli. 29. [2] 1 Cor. xiv. 19.

reading, are—in the Morning service, beside the Te Deum, the Benedicite, the Benedictus, and Psalm c.—in the Evening, the Magnificat, Psalm xcviii, Psalm lxvii, and the Nunc Dimittis. These, with the Venite, which precedes the morning Psalms, are not unfrequently chanted, when the Te Deum, from its supposed length, is merely read. All of them are adapted for music, being poetic in style, and measured in language. Three are portions of the New Testament—the rest, with the exception of the Benedicite, are taken from the Psalms of David. The general relief afforded to the minister and congregation might suffice to recommend the custom of chanting these canticles. If we except times of complete exhaustion, or of natural repose, the mind and body are best relieved by a judicious variation of labour. By this interchange, the powers of both in a healthy subject are reciprocally benefited, in a much greater proportion, than by a state of entire rest. Thus we see, with what art the Church has arranged and varied the several portions of her services, that they should sustain attention and relieve fatigue—never suffering her members to remain for any long period in one posture—either causing them to stand, kneel, or sit —sometimes engaging them in the accents of prayer —sometimes directing their minds to the pure word of God, or its exposition—and again inviting them to unite in a general thankgiving. Hence a churchman is able to keep his attention fixed upon divine things with comparatively little fatigue for the space of nearly three hours, while the dissenters after their hour and a half, feel annoyed and restless, unless there be some popular preacher to arouse particular interest. And wherefore? Not because the Churchman has naturally stronger nerves than his Dissenting

brother, but because he has not disdained to respect the example set him by Fathers and Martyrs of old, to engraft their mode of worship upon present customs, and sanction by his own imitation the practice of ages, in preference to the innovations of some modern experimentalist. He acknowledges as well the beauty of this interchange of service, as its appliableness to human infirmity, since by this means, the soul, naturally heavy and wandering, is preserved from distraction. Among the dissenters, the services are comparatively short—not that the sermon is curtailed, but the extempore prayer, unbroken by the least variation, cannot excite interest or even attention beyond a brief term, and the period when discourses extended to six hours has passed away. The fact is, times are altered—either zeal is more slack, or persons now have a better notion of extremes ; and such customs of extending sermons could no longer be endured. Hence the dissenters have no resource left, but to shorten their worship, and thus stint themselves of their ' daily bread.' The Church on the other hand, in spite of the change of times and manners, keeps her hold upon the persons and affections of her members, without having hitherto felt it necessary to violate the beautiful arrangement of her services, which would have remained unaltered, if even the minor and incidental improvements occasionally suggested had been adopted. Century passes after century, and yet the people can worship in the language and method of their fathers, with comparatively little weariness or disgust.

This is especially the case, when the service is properly conducted,—when that is read which was designed to be read, and that is sung which was designed to be sung. Without observing this distinction, we take our Church at disadvantage. If she

has provided against the infirmities of our nature, we should accept of her provisions, and not reject music when she offers it to relieve her minister, and arouse the energies of her people. No part of her Liturgy had this design more manifestly than the Canticles, whether we consider their length, their musical susceptibility, or the period of the service at which they occur. To deny them their proper character, is to despise the benefits intended by their introduction. If chanted, they would ever answer the design of the Church, by enabling her members to attend even her lengthened services without fatigue.[1]

But it may be said, Cui bono? Is spiritual edification necessarily bound up with length of service? Might not the end be equally well attained, and the hour of worship shortened? Perhaps so, if it be a matter of indifference to the Master, whether his servants stint him of any portion of their duty or not—if when our minds are suitably attuned, we could spend our time better than in the House dedicated to His glory, and in the great congregation, where his favour is especially promised! When our souls are starved by fruition, and our affections cooled by the fire of the divine love, then truly we cannot do better than curtail our services! But if the tension of the mind could be preserved, a 'whole day spent

[1] A most just tribute to the value of music in enlivening a sacred service was paid by Mr. Nic. Ferrar, who, in the somewhat fanciful arrangement of the devotional exercises at Little Gidden, had for the Christmas season of 1631 twelve separate services on successive days, to which he attached the names of certain Christian virtues. These exercises 'were enlivened by hymns and melodies composed by Mr. Ferrar, and set to music by the music master of the family, who accompanied the voices with the viol or the lute.' In that exercise termed the Patient, however, not only was the discourse much extended and peculiarly dry, but there was not any poetry or music at the opening of this as of the rest. 'The contrivance was to exercise that virtue it was intended to teach.' Eccl. Biog. Vol. V. p. 172.

in the courts of God would be better than a thousand,' and were the spirit able to surmount the infirmities of the flesh, the entire Sabbath occupied in the recesses of the Sanctuary, would only cause it the nearer to approach that eternal Sabbath, where praise and adoration 'cease not night nor day.' We deem it, therefore, no slight privilege, that we are enabled in our public ministrations, so to consult the infirmities of the flesh, as 'to wait upon the Lord without distraction' for a longer period, than that of almost any other church in the world.

The observations made upon the Te Deum, apply equally to the Canticles. If the congregation be expected vocally to unite, then no better medium can be suggested than the plain chant—if only mentally, the composition should be simple and intelligible. As, however, the subjects of the hymns are of general interest, the former might seem the most desirable. In the Canticles from the Old Testament, the exhortations to thanksgiving are drawn chiefly from those ties which bind us to God as our Creator and Preserver—in the Hymns from the New, they are gathered in rich clusters from the precious and incomprehensible mystery of our Redemption. Nor are we authorized, for the sake of some paltry or even refined sensual gratification, to present to the poor and uneducated, instead of the sublime strains of devotion which their Church proposes, 'the mere sound of him that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well upon an instrument.' We call upon the people 'to serve the Lord with gladness, and come before His presence with a song;'—we bid them 'go into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise;'—we encourage them 'to come, worship and fall down, and kneel before the Lord their Maker;'—we admonish them 'to praise the

Lord upon the harp, to sing unto the harp with a psalm of thanksgiving'—'with trumpets also and shawms to shew themselves joyful before the Lord the King;'—but, 'if the trumpet give an uncertain sound'—if the understanding accompany not the sentiment, who shall uplift the voice of praise?

V. The Communion Service.

The portions of this beautiful service, which are usually chanted are but few, and those perhaps not selected with the soundest judgment. Before the reading of the Gospel, it is customary to sing the short Anthem: 'Glory be to Thee, O Lord!' And in some places after the Gospel, the yet shorter,—'Thanks be to God!' Neither however appear to receive authority from the Rubric,[1] however admirably chosen to express the adoring thankfulness, with which we hail the glad tidings of the Gospel, fraught with that hope of eternal salvation, without which 'we of all men should be most miserable!' No Christian, therefore, could object to the very ancient custom, which seems to have thus generally obtained. The brevity of either anthem should, however, induce the organist to choose some composition, calculated to prolong, rather than hurry over the time which is devoted to it. In some churches, it is performed with such clamorous haste, that the chant is hardly begun, before you hear its echo dying away in the roof. Suddenness in music produces its effect, when the effect sought corresponds with the time and circumstance. There are two ways in which the mind may be on the moment aroused,—either by a sudden burst of sound, as the blast of a trumpet, the roll

[1] In the first English Liturgy, the direction occurs: 'the Clearkes and people shall answere, Glory be to Thee, O Lorde.' It was however omitted in 1552. 'Inquiry into Historical Facts relative to Parochial Psalmody,' by Jonathan Gray, Esq. York.

of a drum, the crash of the full organ—or a sudden cessation of sound, such as is exemplified in the startling and marked pause towards the conclusion of Handel's Hallelujah Chorus. Here however no effect of the kind is intended, or indeed suited to the subject, which is simple praise. To afford full scope for the expression of gratitude should be the aim of the musical accompaniment; and for this purpose it were well to select a composition prolonged by inartifical repetitions, which, if admissible at any time, are so in this instance. Thus a member of the congregation, instead of being awed into silence, would be able to combine the recollection of his mind, with the utterance of his voice.

Another portion of this service, which is not unfrequently chanted, is the response after the delivery of the several commandments. Of all parts of the Liturgy, however, the Responses to the Commandments seem the least happily chosen for music. This will appear, if we examine the design of the Church in introducing this portion of the Old Testament into the service of the Lord's Supper. It is a natural inquiry, why the ten commandments uttered amid blackness, and darkness, and tempest,—read by the flames of Mount Sinai,—promulged by the sound of a trumpet exceeding loud, should be appointed by our Church to usher in the most solemn and affecting ordinance under the New Dispensation. It does not immediately appear, wherefore the endearing commemoration of the Holy Communion, in which the members of Christ's body are permitted intimately to feel their oneness with their glorified Head, should be introduced by so awful and disheartening a description of the Divine Justice, Holiness, and Majesty. The reason however is manifestly, to check presumption. The nature of this ordinance,

more than any other, forbids a licentious approach. If Jehovah now verifies not His presence amid clouds and fire, but comes more frequently, more closely, and more safely, into communion with us, than He did with His people of old; it is not that He has changed his essential attributes. He is still Holy, and Just, and True; He will not give His glory to another, nor look with an approving eye upon iniquity. Robed as He now is in meekness, He is still the same God who caused the earth to swallow up Nathan and Abiram, swept his destroying wing over the host of Sennacherib, and broke up the blasphemy of Belshazzar in the midst of his banquet. The effect therefore that the condescension of this awful Being should produce, when he invites to an affectionate and intimate communion, should not be to forget transgression, and assume an air of self-righteous assurance; but rather, since He no longer rails round the mountain of his holiness, to rail round our own hearts with the more earnestness, and draw nigh unto Him as Joseph our brother with the deeper obeisance. We know well that in all cases of dependence, the greater the confidence shown, the greater the responsibility incurred—the more love, the hotter anger for the abuse of that love. We need not wonder then, if language is used in allusion to this Sacrament as awful and portentous as any in the whole compass of the Bible. Ominous are the words, in which God bids the ungodly stand off, 'lest He break forth like fire, and none can quench it.' How important that a man should so examine himself before he presume to receive of the sacred elements, that he may approach the table, not in a spirit of fancied holiness and superiority over others, but in a spirit of self-condemnation and meekness! Admirably then has our Church placed

the ten commandments in the very outset of this service, that they should, ere we venture into the Holy of Holies, arouse the conscience, self-convict of transgression, and check any presumptuous feeling of levelling familiarity in the presence of Jehovah! What better calculated to produce these effects than the delivery of the perfect law of God, the very transcript of His mind! How will the communicant, viewing these commands in the breadth of their character, not according to the narrowness of a literal interpretation, smite upon his breast and say, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' 'Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.'

What then is the most proper mode to give utterance to this deep confession? Evidently that which is most natural. It is only when the spirit is in some degree at ease, that it may consent to pour forth its feelings through an artificial medium. Music is perfectly in place to soothe the general sorrows of the unhappy; but when the soul is heaving under a burden of conscious sin, a burden termed in this very service 'intolerable,' and at the same time awe-struck at the immense distance between a sinful worm and a sin-avenging God, there is no leisure even for the science of sweet sounds. The simplest musical modulation, as it demands some effort, in a direction contrary to that in which the whole powers of the soul are supposed to be impelled, is manifestly obtrusive. Earnest to throw from it the load of sin, the spirit seeks for the speediest and simplest mode of making known its wants unto the Lord. Thus the Rubric gives no sanction to the introduction of the Chant in this place, but enjoins that 'the people shall, after every commandment, *ask*' (not say or sing) 'God mercy for their transgression thereof, for the time past, and grace to keep the same for the time

to come.' Surely our Church has provided opportunities enough for the legitimate use of music, without our obtruding it to dissipate, divert, or weaken an impression which can never be too deep, and without which all offering would be abomination in the eye of God!

The authority of the Rubric, no less than the practice of antiquity recommend for the chant another portion of this service, namely, the Nicene Creed; and thus in Cathedral Churches, it may occasionally appear in a musical form. The Romish sacrifice of the Mass comprises it, swollen out into solos, duets, trios, and choruses, embracing a concert in itself, and calculated, under the hands of such masters as Mozart and Haydn, to produce a striking musical effect. The Reformers retained this with similar customs, for reasons already assigned, to conciliate in matters of small moment. They would otherwise have hardly proposed a Confession of Faith, which embraces either subjects of plain narration or metaphysical subtleties, to be sung with instruments and voice. The near connection between Poetry and Music is universally admitted. Both arts seem to strike upon the same or similar chords in the human breast. But where an analogy could be discovered between music and a dry statement of facts, split, as in the case of this and the Athanasian Creed, into abstract logical niceties, baffles all conjecture. Supposing for a moment that a necessary connection exists between music and the mathematics, we could hardly infer from thence, that a mathematical or logical proposition is a fit subject for melody. 'Music is only in its place,' says Mason, 'when it tends to express the sentiments either of supplication, penitence, or thanksgiving.'[1]

[1] Mason's Essays, p. 141, note.

If, however, we are inclined to wonder at the taste which could harmonize an unornamented statement of belief, it is no less a cause of astonishment, that the ancient and beautiful eucharistical hymn, by which the contrite and absolved penitent acknowledges his debt of gratitude, and 'with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, lauds and magnifies the Triune Name'—as well as the yet more rapturous song, in which, after the reception of the elements, he is absorbed in praising, blessing, worshipping, and glorifying the God of his salvation, should be deserted of all external accompaniment, but the bare recitation of the minister and his clerk. Now, independent of the design and custom of the Church from the earliest times, the whole character of these compositions renders them highly adapted for music, and hardly adapted for mere reading. If simplicity be the soul of the sublime, earnest repetition is the expression of energy. When the heart is but partially filled, then the mouth overflows with fluent sentences in an unbroken stream; but it is when the soul is like a full vessel, that the orifice is too contracted for utterance, the rushing waters check their own progress, and the voice, in short, broken, and reiterated language comes at once upon the point of request, if petition, and of thanksgiving, if praise. Such is the character of these compositions. They boast not novelty of idea, or elegance of expression, they merely offer to the lips of the ardent spirit, the simplicity of energetic repetition. Now this, however beautiful when presented through its proper medium, has a somewhat bald and insipid effect upon an unaccustomed ear, when tamely read. It is the very reverse of attiring common-place ideas in a theatrical dress—it is subjecting the most sublime truths in majestic language, to a frigid mode of ex-

pression. We assert not that the rapture of the spirit never attends the bare reading of these glowing anthems, but conceive, that under the most favourable circumstances, that rapture would be better sustained, and the enjoyment highly enhanced, by presenting them in a form better according with their original design.

In many churches, however, it is not possible to give these compositions a musical character. Without a proper instrumental accompaniment, there are obstacles in the way of any performance, which advances beyond the sober pace of the psalm-tune. Then, in such a case, there is no remedy—the anthems are too irregular to be adapted to the chorale—they must therefore be read. But where, upon ordinary occasions, the organ accompaniment is at hand to give direction and energy to the conduct of even intricate and rapid harmonies, what excuse can be made for the practice of reading, when the affections are supposed to be most excited! Why might not a plain and yet varied chant be applied to these sacred hymns, of such a nature as to permit the congregation to unite? The service would thus be unexceptionably beautiful—for music is to an ecclesiastical ordinance, what water is to a landscape—if removed, nothing can compensate for the defect. Oh but the organist does not stay the sacrament! Then the more shame that he is the organist. When will the time be, that the house of God shall be purged of these intermeddlers in divine things, who come merely for the loaves and the fishes, and would as soon have burnt incense at the altar of Rimmon, or smote the cymbals in the temple of Jupiter, as served in the courts of the living God, if only the execrable gold, for which they are bartering their salvation, might have been ensured to them! The greater

scandal, if this be indeed the case; and, so far is it from removing or excusing the evil, that it calls the louder for a thorough purification of the choral part of our sacred services. He that is no Christian, is not fit to be a servant of Christ; and nothing gives the profession of a man an aspect of greater insincerity, than the continued neglect of that blessed sacrament, which is a 'feast of fat things' to a spiritual hunger. That any should slight it is lamentable—that a professed servant of God should turn his back upon it is awful. It is to be hoped, however, that this is not a general evil—that organists not unfrequently mingle with the true members of a Christian congregation round the table of their Lord. When they are present, therefore, there is ample space between the conclusion of the Sanctus, and the reception of the elements to enable them to descend from the gallery, and unite themselves to the body of the communicants; and again after the reception there is time sufficient, to return without haste to lead the magnificent thanksgiving which immediately precedes the final benediction. Enough has been said of the general benefits to accrue from the restoration of music to its due rank in the house of God—but if no other benefit attended it, it were sufficient that a service is thus rendered to the Holy One, as complete in its execution, as pure in its design.

VI. The Burial Service.

Three parts of this service are appointed by the rubric to be 'said or sung:'—the introductory sentences—the portion preceding the deposition of the corpse—and the text from the book of Revelations. In order to obviate the objection, arising from the incapacity of many clergymen to sing, permission is expressly granted for the chanting of these passages

'by the priests and clerks.' So that this duty might be performed by a small and select choir, uniting their voices in some simple, unadorned chant,—the clergyman articulating or singing as best suited his powers. No one, who has been present at a funeral can be insensible to the impressive effect produced by the bare recitation of these portions of the service, so admirably are they selected and disposed—but we may imagine, for unhappily it is left to imagination, how greatly the effect would be deepened by their solemn and suitable performance.[1]

In the use of music at funerals we might deign to take a pattern from the customs of the Hebrews, without rushing into that extravagance, which in later times disgraced their burial rites. Proof have we in scripture, that the lamentations of the Jews over their dead were always attended with music. Not to mention the Abelmizraim at Jacob's funeral, and the psalm composed by David over Saul and Jonathan, both of which were doubtless accompanied by music according to custom, we find a decided evidence of the fact at the death of Josiah. 'All Judah and Jerusalam mourned for Josiah: and Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and all the singing-men and singing-women spake of Josiah in their lamentations unto this day.''[2] In Job we observe a passage alluding to the music of mourners for the dead. 'My harp also is

[1] Whether Grahame, describing an English funeral in his 'Sabbath,' wrote from his own knowledge, or merely after reading the service for the burial of the dead, it is difficult to say. If the former, it was a singular, if not a solitary instance. His lines are:

'Oft at the close of evening prayer, the toll,
The solemn funeral toll, pausing, proclaims
The service of the tomb: the homeward crowds
Divide on either hand: the pomp draws near:
The choirs to meet the dead go forth and sing:
'I am the resurrection and the life.''

[2] 2 Chron. xxxv. 24, 25.

turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep.'[1] The New Testament affords a distinct proof, that the custom prevailed in the time of our Lord. 'When Jesus came into the ruler's house,' on occasion of the death of his daughter, 'he saw the minstrels and the people making a noise.'[2] From other sources of information we learn that the custom was afterwards carried to a ruinous extent. Flute players hired amounted in some instances to several hundreds, and guests were invited for thirty days. In fact it was made an order in the Talmud, 'That the poorest among the Israelites should never at the funeral of a wife engage less than two flutes and one mourner.'[3] Such extremes no one could desire to see imitated in a Christian church. But if a small portion of the expense now lavished, in conformity with an empty fashion, upon the most wanton and heathenish pomp, was applied to restore the service to its original design, by employing a select band of singers to chant those parts appointed to be chanted, how much more soothing to the afflicted relatives, and affecting to the people!

In some country places, the custom has been handed down from generation to generation, of singing a psalm in the church, before the corpse is removed to the ground. This, in default of the other, is highly commendable; and, if judiciously conducted, cannot but interest the feelings of a congregation. It is of great importance in the country to make the service for the burial of the dead peculiarly impressive. In a small population, death occurs but rarely. When it comes, every inhabitant of the village sees the print of its footsteps, and trembles. The victim was known by person or

[1] Job xxx. 31. [2] Matt. ix. 23.
[3] Burney's Hist. Mus. Vol. I. p. 250.

by name. It forms the theme of earnest conversation in every cottage; and a feeling of undefined awe and curiosity hurry the whole neighbourhood to the grave of their departed friend. They crowd the church; and the minister feels, as he opens the volume of prayer, that now at least he has the hearts, as well as the ears of his people. If he has any interest in his sacred employment, he must be earnestly desirous to sustain and deep rivet the solemn thoughts, which such a scene is well calculated to excite. His church then presents to him the chant. On most occasions, when she seeks to make a permanent impression, she does so through the medium of music. Why then slight it, at a time when the minds of the people are especially impressed? Perhaps for every other opportunity of Church Music, the town presents greater facilities than the country—in this instance, however, the country has decidedly the advantage. What edification can be expected from the chant, in the midst of a crowded city, where, not to mention the frequency of funerals, which must deaden the impression in the minds of all but near relatives, uninterested persons are continually passing and repassing, staying for a moment to give a glance of indifference or idle curiosity, and then pressing on after their worldly engagements. In the country all things act in unison—few sounds are heard uncongenial with the solemn service of the dead—a shade of sorrow on the countenances of the congregation, shows their sympathy with the tears of relatives, and the very trees seem to mingle their shadows with the procession, in yet deeper gloom—but in the town stands the little band of mourners, weeping over their departed friend, presenting so rude a contrast with 'the noise of the whip, and the

noise of the rattling of the wheels, and of the prancing horses, and of the jumping chariots,' the stare of the uninterested, the loud laugh of the unfeeling, and the clamour of the busy multitude, that we are forcibly reminded of that time, still rolled up in the volume of prophecy, when there shall be an universal sorrow without sympathy, 'when the land shall mourn, every family apart, and their wives apart.'[1]

It is customary, in some country places, for the friends of the deceased to sing a Psalm before they leave the house, and continue their singing at irregular intervals, as they bear the corpse in slow procession towards the Church. This is a very interesting and no doubt ancient custom.[2] The tune may not indeed be the chastest in composition, or the most appropriate in measure, but even a fastidious taste is gratified as the ear collects the several sounds which, buoyed upon the winds come mellowed in the distance, now swelling in a full symphonious chord, and again

'In cadence sweet, now dying all away.'

He who, at such a moment, with so sad an emblem of human vanity before him, the green as well as the dry tree swept off with the stroke of death, can coolly criticize the composition chosen to embody and express the feelings of the people, may indeed congratulate himself upon his musical taste, but not upon his manly sensibilities. The custom is a good one. Even an inferior tune will less probably offend in the open air, which ever modifies and mellows musical dissonances. And if a little attention were paid to the style of composition and performance on

[1] Zech. xii. 12—14.

[2] In proof of the antiquity of this custom, see Shepherd on Common Prayer, Vol. II. p. 384—386.

these solemn occasions, there can be no question but the mournful chant would act as a most powerful aid to devotion, soothing the sorrows of those immediately interested, and arresting the footsteps of many a heedless wanderer, as his ear catches the falling requiem of a fellow mortal's remains. [1]

VII. The Ordination Service.

At the Ordination of Priests, and Consecration of Bishops, a most ancient and beautiful hymn termed from the initiatory words, 'Veni Creator Spiritus,' is enjoined 'to be said or sung' alternately by the Bishop and people. That it was designed for music is evident by its being thrown into metre. In most cases, it is read, line by line, or couplet by couplet; and indeed unless this part of the duty of the ordaining Bishop could be transferred to a small choir, the obstacle may be considered insurmountable. In all the Continental Churches, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, a capacity to sing is considered an almost essential qualification for every clergyman. With us it is different. The clergy of the Church of England seldom exercise their voices, because there is no part of the service in which an obligation of this kind rests exclusively upon them. The Church has made allowance for a possible infirmity, and permitted reading, or rather saying, which properly means reciting, antiphonally in a raised and measured tone, in the place of singing.[2] But we ought never to forget, that it is only a dispensation in case of incapacity, and by no means intended to supply an excuse for want of exertion. Where the officers of the Church possess the power, she

[1] The Psalms in this service were not appointed till the Restoration, which may account for the rubrical direction merely 'to read' them. See 'Wheatly on the Common Prayer,' p. 448.

[2] Defence of the Old Singing Psalms, p. 22.

expects them to give full effect to every part of her services. If they are able to sing a hymn so manifestly adapted for music, as the one before us, worldly fashion or indolence forms but an infirm excuse for neglect.

There is, perhaps, no portion of the Church ritual more solemn than that, in which the 'governors of Israel willingly offer themselves among the people,'[1] for the work of the priesthood. As this is unquestionably the most important object to which any being can devote his time and talents, the Church avails herself of this dedication, to impress its just character alike upon the people, and upon the priest. She asks, therefore, the aid of external objects to deepen the impression, adopting among other ceremonials, one derived from high antiquity, but reserved for seasons of especial solemnity. It is after the candidates, in the face of God, have bound themselves by solemn assurances and promises, as to their present views, and their future purposes—and after the Bishop has petitioned, that they may have 'strength and power to fulfil the same;' that the Church calls upon all 'the congregation present, secretly in their prayers, to make their humble supplication to God for all these things; for the which prayers, silence is kept for a space.'[2] It is impossible to imagine a custom better calculated to produce the effect designed,—upon the minds of the people, a holy trembling for their brethren, an earnest breathing for their faith and steadfastness—upon the minds of the candidates, a deep sense of unworthiness and unfitness, an humble reliance on an almighty arm—and upon all, a conviction of the presence of the Holy One, as though a warning

[1] Judges v. 9. [2] Rubrick.

voice were heard, 'The Lord is in his holy Temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.'[1]

The practice obtained at an early age of the Christian Church, and seems to have been an imitation of the usages of the Jews in their Temple worship. In like manner upon an occasion of great solemnity, the opening of the seven seals, St. John represents 'silence in heaven for about the space of half an hour.'[2]

Those only, who have been personally engaged in the ordination service, can form an adequate idea of the solemn effect of this pause. It comes with power upon the imagination even of the man of self and of sin—and where there exists a proper sense of the awful responsibility of those obligations under which men thus voluntarily place themselves, the thoughts and images, that crowd upon the mind, unchecked by any earthly sound or association beyond the oppressive sensation of this 'speaking stillness,' possess no counterpart on this side eternity. What then follows this marked pause? Nothing surely that is infirm, imperfect, or incongruous. The admirable arrangements of the Church's liturgies may convince us, that the mind will be recalled from the intensity of its contemplations, not by a rude and offensive, but by some gradual and soothing interval. Nor are we mistaken. The aid of Him, by whose gracious influences, ministerial labours, however dead, become fragrant 'as a field which the Lord hath blessed,' is besought in strains which rise floating upon this silence, stealing upon the senses, and gently recalling them to earth and earthly concerns.

'Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
And lighten with celestial fire.'

[1] Hab. ii. 20. [2] Rev. viii. 1.

Hardly a hymn can be conceived more in unison with the calm, solemn, and humbled state of a soul, bowed under a sense of his own worthlessness, and the perfections of Him, to whom he has thus devoted every faculty he possesses. If then in one portion of this sacred service more than another, there should be nothing of haste or of negligence—nothing of apathy or indolence—nothing likely to arrest the attention as defective in spirit or in form—it is here, where the mind is supposed to be most awe-struck and abstracted from earthly associations, and where it requires, like Daniel after his revelations at the river Hiddekel, soothing anodynes to enable it to regain its wonted composure. How rude a substitute then is the dry recitation of this beautiful Hymn, for the sweet strains of the Church's harmony!

If, however, we may understand the following lines literally, and not as the mere play of a poetic fancy, it would seem, as if the Veni Creator Spiritus were not always read in the Ordination service. To those who value Herbert's piety without his quaintness, there need be no apology for their introduction:

'Twas silence in thy temple, Lord,
When slowly through the hallowed air,
The spreading cloud of incense soared,
Charged with the breath of Israel's prayer.
'Twas silence round thy throne on high,
When the last wondrous seal unclosed,
And in the portals of the sky,
Thine armies awfully reposed.
And this deep pause, that o'er us now
Is hov'ring—comes it not of thee!
Is it not like a mother's vow,
When with her darling on her knee,
She weighs and numbers o'er and o'er,
Love's treasure, hid in her fond breast,
To cull from that exhaustless store,
The dearest blessing and the best?
And where shall mother's bosom find,
With all its deep love-learned skill,
A prayer, so sweetly to her mind,
As, in this sacred hour and still,

Is wafted from the white-robed choir,
Ere yet the pure high-breathed lay
'Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,'
Rise, floating on its dove-like way.
And when it comes, so deep and clear
The strain, so soft the melting fall,
It seems not, to the entranced ear,
Less than thine own heart-cheering call,
Spirit of Christ—thine earnest given
That these, our prayers, are heard, and they
Who grasp this hour the sword of heaven,
Shall feel thee on their weary way.'

Christian Year.—Ordination.

Thus has the church provided for the use of the chant in her services; 'and if the prophet David did think, that the very meeting of men together, and their accompanying one another to the house of God, should make the bond of their love insoluble, and tie them in a league of inviolable amity, (Psalm liv. 14.) how much more may we judge it reasonable to hope, that the like effects may grow in each of the people towards each other, in them all towards their pastor, and in their pastor towards every of them; between whom there daily and interchangeably pass, in the hearing of God himself and in the presence of his holy angels, so many heavenly acclamations, exultations, provocations, petitions, songs of comfort, psalms of praise and thanksgiving: in all which particulars, as when the pastor maketh their suits, and they with one voice testify a general assent thereunto; or when he joyfully beginneth and they with alacrity follow, dividing between them the sentences wherewith they strive, which shall most show his own, and stir up others' zeal to the glory of that God whose name they magnify; or when he proposeth unto God their necessities, and they their own requests for relief in every of them: or when he lifteth up his voice like a trumpet, to proclaim unto them the laws of God; they adjoining,

though not as Israel did, by way of generality, a cheerful promise, 'All that the Son hath commanded, we will do;' yet that which God doth no less approve, that which savoureth more of meekness, that which testifieth rather a feeling knowledge of our common imbecility, unto the several branches thereof, several humble and lowly requests for grace at the merciful hands of God, to perform the thing which is commanded; or when they wish reciprocally each other's ghostly happiness; or when he by exhortation raiseth them up, and they by prostration of their readiness, declare he speaketh not in vain unto them; these interlocutory forms of speech, what are they else, but most effectual, partly testifications, and partly inflammations of all piety?'[1] 'Blessed therefore, be the name of our God, and blessed be the memory of his instruments, who in reforming our worship followed not after the tumultuous manner of other nations, but after the pattern and spirit of holy David: for they did the very same things which the wise man records of David, 'as they set singers before the altar, so they beautified our feasts and set in order the solemn times, to the end that we might praise his holy name, and that our temples might sound from morning.'' [2]

[1] Hooker's Eccles. Polity, Book v. Sect. 39.
[2] Ecclus. xlvii. 9. 10. Bisse's Rationale on Choir Service, p. 50.

VIII.

THE ANTHEM.

> Eftsoons they heard a most melodious sound,
> Of all that mote delight a dainty ear,
> Such as at once might not on living ground,
> Save in this paradise, be heard elsewhere;
> Right hard it was for wight, which did it hear,
> To read what manner music that mote be.
>
> SPENCER.

BOLD indeed is he who would controvert the position, that our church services should be conformable to the character of our congregations. The nominal Christian church encloses within her pale men of every rank, age, and endowment. The man of noble birth, of cultivated understanding, of refined taste, of youthful sensibility, finds no readier admission to her courts, than the man of coarse habits, the sluggard whose mind has run to seed, the haggard pauper. Now all these characters, varied and contradictory as are their habits, tastes, and capabilities, expect the public service to propose to them subjects, of sufficient interest to arouse the most languid affections, and of sufficient simplicity to be imbibed by the lowest understanding. Nor would it satisfy them, that the general scope of the several devotional acts be intelligible. They feel that they have a right to demand,

that each shall convey to every individual some portion of profit and edification. Deeming it unjust, that the amusement, or even religious advantages of a polished few should supersede the spiritual wants of the many, they expect,—and were their expectation ill-founded, the service of God would be no longer a reasonable service—to be enabled to unite, either vocally or mentally, in every portion of the public ministrations.

How then has the church answered this expectation? Comprehending within her walls every possible rank from the king upon his throne, to the meanest of his subjects, it required, under God, a large grasp of human wisdom, to devise a varied service, every part of which should be universally edifying and intelligible—has she evidenced that wisdom? There are, even among such as make a loud clamour about their high-churchmanship, those who hesitate in their answer, and deem that the kind of worship, which bears the name prefixed to this essay, qualifies the praise which would otherwise be generally accorded her. They would therefore willingly relieve the Church of all onus of this responsibility, if the words [here followeth the anthem] did not occupy a prominent place in her rubrick, and thus evince her full approbation of this species of composition. Nor can they contend that the Church, at the time of the reformation, did not contemplate such intricate pieces as now pass under the name of anthems; for, as we have already seen, the compositions of that period were far more intricate and curious than those of the present. By her retaining the name, therefore, it is plain that, if she objected to the style then in vogue, but now happily obsolete, she indicated that her disapproval respected not the use, but the abuse of modulations of a varied character. Neither can they

argue, that the word anthem might be synonimous with psalmody ; as psalmody was at that time, in its purest childhood, but partially admitted into the country, and not in the least degree recognized as a portion of divine worship. The more common kind of anthem performed in parish churches was a species of chant. Thus anthem and chant were not unfrequently used as synonimous terms. The word itself is supposed to come from antiphon, the simple meaning of which denotes its alternate character, αντιφωνη vox reciproca. According to this original signification, the invitatory psalm is called an anthem, in the rubrick before it, as is implied by saying that 'on Easter-day another anthem is appointed.'[1] At the reformation, however, the term had obtained a fuller meaning ; and thus the people were permitted to select a composition more or less florid, according to their peculiar ideas or convenience.

Still, although the anthem can thus point to rubrical authority, it is, in the present day, systematically excluded from many churches, upon the plea that it is unintelligible to the majority of the people, and therefore incapable of producing spiritual benefit. As the objection thus calls in question the wisdom of the Church in the above injunction, and as, at the same time, it has acquired a peculiar prominency with many well-meaning persons, it claims attention, before any of the minor scruples that are frequently brought up as a corps of reserve, in case this principal one be dislodged.

I. The objection then consists of an assertion 'that the anthem is unintelligible to the great body of the people,' and a deduction from it, 'that therefore to them it must be devoid of spiritual benefit.'

[1] Beauty of Holiness, by Dr. Bisse, p. 95, note.

And first, in regard to this objection, which is indeed, as Hooker says 'so strong, that it might persuade, if the truth thereof were not doubtful,'[1] there must be noticed a vagueness about the term unintelligible. If by it is meant, that the full bearing of the piece, in all its intricacies as a composition, is not generally understood, the assertion is unquestionably correct. But then follows the inquiry, whether that be necessary for edification. But if,—in which case alone the argument has any weight,—it is pretended that the understanding cannot grasp sufficient to answer all the purposes of spiritual blessing, the assertion is as false, as the inference is unsound.

The deduction is unquestionably best combated by experience; and although it is difficult, in individual cases, to determine the exact amount of benefit received, yet if the enlivening of spiritual graces be considered a benefit, the very general interest in choral music manifested by individuals ignorant of the art, may be verified by almost daily observation. In fact, since it is universally admitted, that music has in itself a native puissance to deepen any impression previously existing—however its power to produce such impression be questioned—then by what process of reasoning do we collect, that in religious matters only it becomes bereft of this power. 'I have heard,' says Dr. Brady, the translator of the New Version of the Psalms, 'many testifie from their own experience, and I question not but we have many present witnesses to the truth of it, that whenever they have been present at a performance of this nature, they have felt their zeal grow warm, if it were not kindled before, and increase considerably, if it were.'[2]

If then this inference be hardly borne out by

[1] Eccl. Pol. Book V. Sect. 39.

[2] Sermon on St. Cecilia's Day, by Nicholas Brady, D. D. p. 12.

experience, it were well to examine the accuracy of the assertion upon which it is built; that the anthem is unintelligible to the people generally—in other words, to those who have never cultivated a musical taste.

The anthem is a varied composition, adapted to sacred or devotional words, founded upon the Canto Fermo, and admitting almost every possible musical licence and measure. It disdains alike the heavy trappings of the chorale, and the fetters of the chant, grasps the most daring chords, and branches out into the utmost variety of notes, subject only to certain scientific regulations, of which the uninitiated are necessarily ignorant. It assumes to itself the liberty of transposing, repeating, and dividing the sacred expressions which it accompanies, without an apparent idea of a servile adaptation of the sound to the exact position of the words. Considering words only as symbols of ideas, it seeks to impress the general subject by means of a symbol of equal or more magical authority. Thus unshackled, it hesitates not to reduce to practice, the most abstruse and unembarrassed parts of musical science, and is consequently so difficult in many cases of perfect apprehension, that even musical men find it no easy task, to accompany it intellectually when first heard, through all its involutions, aptness of emphases, transitions, propriety of arrangement, justness of proportion, and consistency of subject. The boldness with which it treats the Scripture passage it professes to adopt, interrupting the steady progress of the sentence by transposition, prolongation of syllables, peculiar accentuation, and repetitions, augments greatly the difficulty of a perfect comprehension at once of its entire beauties as a composition. The public in general are often utterly unable to discern

the smallest connection between the scriptural text before them, and the long fifteen minutes' operation of a choir; and wonder mightily, by what magical process, a few plain words are spun out to such a length, without addition or commentary, without pause or hesitation, but with the utmost bustle, noise, and expedition.

We need not therefore wonder that the question should be asked, what possible benefit can result from such an exhibition,—but we *may* wonder, that without further examination, it should be so summarily answered, by the ejection of the anthem from its appointed station in the public service. A little consideration will show, that even such a composition,—and the description of it has in no respect been softened down to suit a purpose,—may be a rich means of blessing even to the most untutored; and that, in so eminent a degree, as to plead strongly for a far more extended patronage than it at present enjoys. Nay, that such frequently derive a higher degree of spiritual profit than many, who possess a more correct taste and enlightened understanding.

No one will presume to deny that music, in however complicated a form, if it be but music, and not mere noise, arouses in all minds pleasurable feelings either of a joyous or mournful character. Nor are these mere animal sensations. There are ever connected with them ideas, perhaps dim and undefinable, borne upon some association thus called forth either for good or evil. This intellectual enjoyment moreover, is not necessarily dependent upon words, but attends the bare agency of instrumental sounds. Who cannot remember hundreds of instances in which, by the mere casual melody of some passing instrument, his mind has instantly become crowded with images, recalling objects of interest, or trains of ideas, which

had long past away, and perhaps long been forgotten? The same effect follows vocal music, when the words are undistinguishable through distance or other causes. The mind is not idle, but its operations are regulated solely by the joyous or mournful style of the performance. If, however, without distinctly apprehending the words, the subject of the piece be ascertained, the wilful and stray associations which were before permitted in a measure to follow their natural impulse, have now a centre of convergence; and thus, according to the subject-matter, assume a secular or devotional character. To illustrate these remarks:—If on a ramble in the country we hear, borne upon the winds, the lively notes of some singer, though so remote that the words are entirely lost, yet the character of the tune alone sets the spirit dancing in accordance, and creates an undefined but perceptible pleasure. Something in the strain may remind us of the enjoyments of a home from which we have long been estranged, lead to a retrospective meditation upon scenes endeared by early associations, and call up many a fresh and youthful feeling which had been buried under the cares and anxieties of years. Thus the joy, diffused by these musical sounds, could not be reasonably stigmatized as a joy without understanding. The thoughts aroused by this exciting cause, are alive and active; but the direction of them is wayward, and independent of that cause. If again as the sounds approach, we become acquainted with their subject and design, though still unable to distinguish the words, the busy mind possesses now a centre, around which it may convolve, and knowing nothing further of the song, 'unite with the spirit and with the understanding also.' Thus, without being in the least degree acquainted with the mechanism of the com-

position, or the beauty of the poetry, the bare sound of the music may awaken the feelings, and the knowledge of the subject suffice to give them a direction. Enough is thus understood to excite a 'reasonable joy.'

Scripture moreover seconds experience in corroboration of the fact, that music needs not any particular form of language to render it intelligible. 'Even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?'[1] This evidently implies, that the mere playing upon a pipe or harp, or sounding with a trumpet, if there be a distinction in the sound, that is, if it have character and design, will, without the intervention of language, convey ideas to the mind, as well as feelings to the affections. If the tune answer truly the purpose of the performer, that purpose will be impressed upon the mind of the hearer—if joy be the expression, joy will be also its interpretation; and unless the medium is perverted or obstructed by some cross circumstance, without any further exertion of the intellect than the bare knowledge of the subject of the piece, the soul will naturally assume that temper and character which was contemplated in the composition. What is there in the performance of national airs upon occasions of solemnity and peril, as on the eve and in the melay of battle, to arouse an army's enthusiasm, and incite them 'to do and to dare' beyond any other influence that might be used? Is it admiration for the piece as a composition, or ability to comprehend and explain all the minutiæ of its internal structure,

[1] 1 Cor. xiv. 7, 8.

point out its proportions, and analyze its beauties? No! without understanding a solitary note, or possessing the slightest knowledge of the mechanism of the art generally, or the air particularly, unskilled and unskilful, the whole man has been so wrought upon by the associations thus aroused, that the most astonishing effects have been produced upon the spirit and temper, almost rivaling the fabled wonders of the Grecian Orpheus.

If such are the known effects of music when applied to the things of this world, why should they not equally accompany the music of the Church? Has not the veriest clown in a congregation a natural power to mark a distinction between what is joyous, and what is mournful in a musical strain? Are not his feelings as capable as those of the most refined musician of being elevated by that which is enlivening, and soothed by that which is pathetic? Is it actually necessary for him to be master of all the mechanism of the composition, before he can enter into its spirit? Does a man require to become acquainted with shipbuilding and the art of navigation, before he can sail in a vessel? We have already seen that the knowledge of the mathematical part of musical science may consist without much enjoyment of the art; why may not the reverse be the fact?—The people crowd the courts of the Lord's house. It is a season of peculiar solemnity. Provision has been made to glorify God by acts of especial worship. Every talent is called into exercise for the hallowed occasion. After prayer, the people are called upon to unite in thanksgiving. The subject of the anthem is distinctly declared; the text is specified and read. It may be that the Church breaks forth in loud Hosannas for the birth of a Saviour: 'Glory to God in the Highest, and on

earth peace, good-will towards men,'—or she mourns her own sins, and the sufferings of her Lord : ' All we like sheep have gone astray, and thou hast laid on Him the iniquity of us all,'—or she springs up at the blast of the resurrection trump ;—' The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised,'—or she calls upon Jehovah for present mercy : ' Hear my prayer,'—or there is a sound of coming judgment : ' Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces as a potter's vessel.' But where are the souls of the common class during the vivid musical expression of these subjects ? Oh they cannot enjoy it—they understand it not—they see not the dependence of one bar upon another, or the beauty of this transition, or the resolution of such a discord, or the grace of such an ornament, or the mutual bearing of the several parts of the fugue, or the cause for the repetition of such a syllable and the prolongation of such another, or the method for the regulation of the stops,—as if all this were necessary to enable the voluble harmony to win its way into the affections of the listener ! ' On the contrary the very deep and general interest shewn by the people to becoming performances of this nature has wrung a reluctant testimony even from the most prejudiced, who have been driven daringly to brand it as a mere carnal enjoyment, because the anthem does too manifestly please and tickle the public ear. Wherever then there exists a heart burning with gratitude, and a mind in any degree susceptible of musical sounds, there is preparation enough for the exaltation of the spirit on the wings of heavenly music and heavenly love. With these requisites, and the words of the anthem before him, the most unskilled naturally unites as well with the understanding as with the affections, and participates in a joy with

which the scientific intricacies of the composition have no power to intermeddle. Enough for him that a means is afforded, by which he may mentally pour forth the feelings of thankful adoration, which engross his affections. He envies not his more scientific neighbour. He feels a rapture proportioned to his capabilities, and finding his own soul wafted heavenward, he wearies not himself with fruitless conjectures respecting the inferiority of his perceptions to those of others, or deadens a positive enjoyment by moaning over an immaterial defect.

A congregation, thus invited to participate in the spiritual benefits of the anthem, may be considered to consist of three classes, no one of which is physically deprived of these benefits. First, persons of defective apprehension, as children, who could not gather or retain in their minds the subject of the piece. Such might at least be able to discriminate between joyous and mournful sounds, and thus, if their souls be disposed to devotion, have their affections proportionably influenced. Besides, this general infirmity of mind would not only materially affect, but even nullify the other parts of the service, addressed especially to the understanding. The feelings of all persons of weak intellect are universally admitted to be peculiarly acute, in the same manner as in physics the destruction of one sense frequently quickens and invigorates the others. As it respects such, the feelings will be the chief, if not the only channel of spiritual communication. And thus, when almost every other part of the service would be as 'a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal,' the anthem might alone supply that edification, which is the grand design of all our public ministrations. As to the second class, the uneducated,—of which undoubtedly the main part of the people consist,—the

common understanding with which God has endowed them, will yet enable them to comprehend a simple subject—and the principles of musical feeling almost universally intuitive, will point out the general coincidence between the melody and the idea it is intended to express. If therefore the scriptural passage set to music be audibly read, and an opportunity afforded of finding it in the Bible, the understanding will thus have presented to it a subject sufficiently intelligible to occupy and regulate the affections. This remark applies equally to men of polished and intellectual minds, who are yet destitute of a power of understanding or appreciating musical expression. Unless there is a positive defect, which disables them from being excited in any respect by the influence of melodious sounds, they will stand upon the same level with their uneducated brethren, and however slight the interest taken in the musical strain, yet will that interest be attracted, by the scripture passage before them, into its proper and spiritual direction. A third class, who are scientifically acquainted with music, and have 'their ear practised to discern between good and evil' in composition, are universally admitted to possess the power of comprehending the subject of the anthem; and thus demand no further remark, than that, if they fail to derive spiritual benefit, it arises not from any inability to accompany their sacrifice of thanksgiving with the full powers of a cultivated understanding. Hence all in a congregation may obtain some spiritual benefit from the performance of a chaste, ecclesiastical anthem.

'I see no reason,' says an old author 'why people may not take as goode edification by the singing which others singe, as by the prayers which others reade, especially if they so singe as they may be understood. Yea but, say they, this cunning and

exquisite musicke, wherein the bass and contra-tenors, and other partes singe with full quier, with often repetitions of the same thinges, is so confuse and indistinct, that the very ditty cannot be understood, much lesse any edification taken. That it is not understood is the faulte of the men, not of the art. Obscuritie is amended by familiar wordes. As to repetitions, if some thinges, by the number of voyces be hardly understood at once; surely the second, third, or fourth repetition, is a meane to cause it to be understood the better: neither if it be understood at the first, is it therefore a faulte to repeate it againe, because the often ingeminating and sounding the same thinges in our eares, doth cause the thinge repeated to take deepe roote, and worke effectually in our heartes.'[1]

That general utility was the design of the venerable compilers of our liturgy and church-offices, we see from the declaration of their purpose, 'that all the people, of what degree or condition soever they be, may learn how to invocate and call upon the name of God, and know what duty they owe both to God and man; so that they may *pray, believe, and work according to knowledge* while they live here, and after this life be with Him that with His blood hath bought us all.'[2] Thus they made no pretension to gratify the mere taste of the cultivated man, at the expense of the uneducated; nor on the other hand descend to the vulgarism of the lower ranks, to the disgust of the higher. They endeavoured to unite all classes by associating simplicity with elegance, plainness with propriety, the feeling of the heart with the conviction of the understanding. They were as tender of the poor as of the rich, and as jealous of

[1] Praise of Musicke, pp. 140, 141.
[2] Preface to the Book of Homilies.

occasioning needless offence to the rich as to the poor.

This being plainly the design of the Church, we may expect to find it developed throughout her services; and if one particular portion should appear to some not calculated to answer this end, the known wisdom as well as purity which characterized all her actions should alone, it might be thought, induce them to pause, ere they condemn a custom bearing the stamp of her authority. Now she never could hope to devise a service, every part of which should be equally intelligible, and edifying to all classes of her members. She knew that men have many tastes and endowments, differing as well in spiritual as in temporal concerns. She never therefore indulged the chimerical expectation, that every part of her services should in equal proportions meet those varied tastes and endowments; but trusted, that if not the same, yet some spiritual blessing might be universally conveyed by even the meanest or least popular ceremonial in her worship. Still she professed to have no controul over the degree or kind of edification derivable to each. She knew, that this depended entirely upon the character and qualifications of the mind of the individual—that she was but the medium of communication between the blessed Spirit and the human soul—and that she had no power in herself to force the latter, or regulate 'the diversities of the operations' of the former. As merely the duct connecting the fountain of the divine grace with the reservoir of the human heart, she claimed influence neither over the quality and depth of the waters of that fountain, nor over the condition of the reservoir to receive them,—it was her's alone to transmit them pure and undefiled through her channel. And she had the evidence of scripture as

well as of experience, that the spiritual graces, thus conveyed, flow not always in a similar manner and measure. In the twelfth chapter of St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, this difference is broadly stated.[1] The apostle assures us, that though there are diversities of gifts, differences of administrations, and diversities of operations, yet that it is the same Spirit, the same Lord, and the same God that worketh all in all. To every believer, however, his peculiar sanctified gift or qualification, natural endowment or inclination, taste or conviction, is given under the character of 'the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal.' If therefore the apostle, with this knowledge of the mind of God, had arranged an universal service, adapted to the various characters mentioned in this chapter, all under the influence of the same Spirit, all children of God, we may be very sure, that the several parts of which it might be composed, would vary, in individual interest, according as they were proportioned to the several qualifications and endowments, which distinguished the members of the Church. The believer, upon whom the blessed Spirit had poured 'the gift of prophecy' might feel his mind less interested in the unfolding some doctrinal truth, than he who had the 'word of wisdom,' or obtain a less degree of edification, than he who had 'the gift of faith.' And thus the blessing derived might vary in degree, although each obtain his allotted portion. Would a man then be authorized to denounce any particular part as being less interesting to him than some other? 'Would not the benevolence of the gospel give a different direction to the feelings? And instead of that narrow, exclusive, and monopolizing spirit, which it is to be feared, is too characteristic of some of the declared professors of 'the truth as

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 4—11.

it is in Jesus,' ought he not to be patient and rejoice, when to men of taste and sentiment, who might find little to attract their devotion in the general course of the service 'such means are addressed as may bring home to their acceptance also 'the words of this life?'' [1]

In fact the several parts of the Christian service may be compared to the members of the body, each of which has its peculiar relative province assigned to it. No one has a right to despise the services of another—prayer may not reject praise, nor praise prophecying. 'If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.' [2] Is a man authorized to declare musical accompaniments to scripture truths inadmissible in the house of God, because his perceptions are blunted, his taste uncultivated, and his edification diminished? May it not be, that at the very time that he is yielding to listless impatience, the souls of others are experiencing that 'divinest glow,' which anticipates the joys of the blest, and breathes as it were the atmosphere of the New Jerusalem? Why then should not the Christian be content with his minor portion of spiritual profit, so that his brethren 'may be fulfilled with heavenly benediction?' Since, as we have endeavoured to show, every member of the church may receive some benefit from even a complicated anthem, if he possess merely those common properties of sense and sound of which

[1] Chalmers' Discourses on the Christian Revelation, p. 20.
[2] 1 Cor. xii. 15—21.

the very brute creation are not destitute, why should he not welcome that degree of food, which his own negligence perhaps has rendered less nourishing than it might have been, that others may enjoy a spiritual 'feast of fat things full of marrow, and wines on the lees well refined?' However low his enjoyment, he should receive it with thankfulness and humiliation, and grudge not the higher edification of those of higher gifts.

The above remarks have been grounded upon the very prevalent assumption, that edification is in proportion to knowledge. Were however the uninitiated to weigh their comparative spiritual enjoyment with that of the more scientific, it is a question, whether they would see much cause for envy. Well and profoundly said an old divine, 'It is a great gift to have no gift,' and the remark is not inapplicable in this particular. Such and so many are the temptations that lurk in the robe of talent, that he who is favoured by God with many gifts, has the more need to be on the watch, lest Satan pervert them into so many snares. In this light may no gift be said to be a great gift. Not that the gifts of God are therefore to be despised; for the parable of the ten talents evinces, that the higher the endowment, if devoted to the glory of God, the nobler the reward—'to him that hath shall be given,'—but he who possesses none, may be comforted in his poverty by the consideration, that he presents none for the assaults of Satan. The very knowledge and love of the science, enticing musical men from the simplicity of spiritual enjoyment to fix their attention upon the beauty and elegancies of the composition, and so mingle the dross of human gratification with the pure gold of devotional feeling, becomes a snare; while the want of it preserves the uninitiated from

any dread of the temptation. If the latter loses something of the intensity of musical enjoyment possessed by the former, his rapture may be more pure and indestructible, while he finds no human obstacle to interpose between him and that God, in whose communion his affections are centered.

Those who deny the Anthem its hold upon the public ear in our services, from the notion that it is generally unintelligible, would do well to consult the judicious Hooker. He attributes to music a power, 'laying aside altogether the consideration of the ditty or matter,' of winning the heart to the cause of Religion, and 'much edifying, if not the understanding, because it teacheth not, yet surely the affections, because therein it worketh much.' 'Touching musical harmony, whether by instrument or by voice, it being but of high and low sounds in a due proportionable disposition, such notwithstanding is the force thereof, and so pleasing effects it hath, in that very part of man which is most divine, that some have been thereby induced to think, that the soul itself by nature is, or hath in it, harmony. A thing which delighteth all ages and beseemeth all states: a thing as seasonable in grief as in joy, as decent being added unto actions of greatest weight and solemnity, as being used when men most sequester themselves from action. The reason hereof is an admirable facility which music hath to express and represent to the mind, more inwardly than any other sensible mean, the very standing, rising, and falling, the very steps and inflexions every way, the turns and varieties of all passions, whereunto the mind is subject: yea, so to imitate them, that whether it resemble unto us the same state wherein our minds already are, or a clean contrary, we are not more contentedly by the one confirmed, than changed and led away by the other.

In harmony the very image and character of virtue and vice is perceived, the mind delighted with their resemblances, and brought, by having them often iterated, into a love for the things themselves. For which cause there is nothing more contagious and pestilent than some kinds of harmony: than some, nothing more strong and potent unto good. And that there is such a difference of one kind from another, we need no proof but our own experience, inasmuch as we are at the hearing of some more inclined unto sorrow and heaviness, of some more mollified and softened in mind: one kind apter to stay and settle us, another, to move and stir our affections: there is that draweth to a marvellous, grave, and sober mediocrity; there is also that carrieth as it were into extacies, filling the mind with a heavenly joy, and for the time in a manner severing it from the body: so that *although we lay aside altogether the consideration of the ditty or matter*, the very harmony of sounds being framed in due sort, and carried from the ear to the spiritual faculties of our souls, is, by a native puissance and efficacy, greatly available to bring to a perfect temper whatsoever is there troubled, apt as well to quicken the spirits as to allay that which is too eager, sovereign against melancholy and despair, forcible to draw forth tears of devotion, if the mind be such as can yield them, able both to move and moderate all affections.'[1]

II. A second objection to Anthems has sprung from the necessity of associating them with instruments, which, by some professing Christians, are deemed unlawful or inexpedient in the House of God. This condemnation of instrumental music was among the novelties of the Calvinistic reformers, who were

[1] Hooker's Eccl. Polity, Book V. sect. 38.

morbidly sensitive of any Romanist defilement. We have already noticed the attempt made by them to put down Church music altogether. In the year 1562, it was proposed that 'all curious singing and playing of the organs be laid aside, whereby,' says Strype, 'we may perceive how much biased these divines were, most of whom seem to have been exiles, towards those platforms, which were received in the Reformed Churches, where they had a little before sojourned.'[1]

The dread manifested by these good people lest the Romish dragon, now lying prostrate in this country, should still have life sufficient to exercise her several 'talants' to their injury, if once touched, is well illustrated by the 'ydle feare,' with which the multitude regarded the dragon, slain by the Red Crosse Knight.

[1] Preface to the York Selection of Hymns. There is something peculiarly touching in the simple and unaffected manner in which old Isaac Walton bemoans the sorrows of our Israel during the great rebellion, when the Puritans obtained their desire, and worked their pleasure upon the Temple-music, while 'she, being desolate, sat upon the ground. After dwelling upon the heavenly enjoyment which Dr. Donne, the dean of St. Paul, had in the music of the Church, his thoughts naturally revert to the state in which the Metropolitan Cathedral then was —'its pavement dug up, and sold—the floor converted into saw-pits,—the lead torn off the roof—the west portico turned into an exchange for petty tradesmen, and finally the whole body of it converted to a stable or horse-garrison, for the better awing of that city, whose pride and faction raised the fire, and whose purse added fuel to it, for the inflaming of the kingdom.'[1] 'After this manner,' says Walton speaking of the Cathedral service from which Dr. Donne had derived so much comfort, 'did the disciples of our Saviour, and the best of Christians in those ages of the Church nearest to his time, offer their praises to Almighty God. And the reader of St. Augustine's life may there find, that towards his dissolution he wept abundantly, that the enemies of Christianity had broke in upon them, and profaned and ruined their sanctuaries; and because their public hymns and lauds were lost out of the Church. And after this manner have many devout souls lifted up their hands and offered acceptable sacrifices unto Almighty God, where Dr. Donne offered his, and now lies buried.

But now, O Lord, how is that place become desolate!' 1656.[2]

[1] Life of Archbishop Laud, p. 538. [2] Eccl. Biog. Vol. IV. p. 451.

'Some feared, and fledd: some feared, and well it feigned;
One, that would wiser seem than all the rest,
Warned him not touch, for yet perhaps remaynd
Some ling'ring life within his hollow brest,
Or in his wombe might lurke some hidden nest
Of many dragonettes, his fruitfull seede;
Another sayd, that in his eyes did rest
Yet sparkling fyre, and badd thereof take heede;
Another sayd, he saw him move his eyes indeede.

'One mother, whenas her fool-hardy childe
Did come too neare, and with his talants play,
Half deade through feare, her little babe revyld,
And to her gossibs gan in counsell say;
'How can I tell, but that his talants may
Yet scratch my sonne, or rend his tender hand.'
So diversely themselves in vain they fray.'[1]

It might however be imagined, that time would have dissipated this causeless dread, and induced the successors of the puritans to disown the prejudices, if not the principles, of their forefathers. It might be supposed, that the progress of knowledge would unfold the real beauty and innocence of many customs, and instill a feeling of regret at the precipitance of former measures. But it is humiliating to confess an error; and hence pride and prejudice have tended to counterbalance that discriminating insight into the properties of essentials and accidentals, which marks the present age. A better feeling has however occasionally appeared. Taste, which is bountifully dispensed, could not easily be destroyed. What men admired, they felt inclined to imitate; and thus the dissenters, by the gradual adoption of innocent and interesting customs previously condemned, have tacitly admitted the mistake of their ancestors, in attempting systematically to crush principles interwoven with their very existence. Still although it is gratifying to observe the progress of taste among our presbyterian and dissenting brethren, symptoms occa-

[1] Faery Queene, Book I. c. xii.

sionally appear sufficiently plain to evince, that the hour is not yet arrived, when they shall burst their own voluntary fetters, enjoy the gifts of their Maker without shuddering, and deem that they then most glorify Him, when they place upon his altar, every talent with which he has entrusted them.[1]

It is unnecessary to repeat here the proofs, adduced in a former essay to demonstrate the use of instruments in the temple service among the Jews. The fact, though acknowledged upon Scriptural authority, is presumed by some insufficient to form the ground of an argument for their admission into the Christian churches. It is contended, that the abrogation of the whole of the ceremonial part of the Mosaic ritual implies the renunciation of instrumental music as an auxiliary to devotion, and that the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom renders the sound of many instruments, which is assumed to be a carnal enjoyment, unsuitable as the medium of a Christian's thanksgiving.

In determining however what parts of the Hebrew are unlawful in a Christian service, we must make a wide distinction between those rites which were woven into the very nature of the Jewish constitution, and those which were purely accidental. Of the former class were all ceremonies typical of the Saviour, and significant of obligation, such as sacrifices, and circumcision, with all their minute dependencies. Of the latter class, were clearly moral obligations, and the dedication of natural gifts and endowments to the glory of the Giver. The former were annulled by their founder,

[1] "So lately as 1807 upon an attempt to introduce an organ into a church at Glasgow, the Presbytery declared their determination 'to avert so dire a calamity from our Church and our Country, to crush in the bud so scandalous a prostitution of sacred things.'" Preface to the York Selection of Hymns.

when the Messiah, of whose person and offices they were the types, had come into the world, and another and simpler ritual was substituted. Whosoever then, after this repeal, wilfully persisted in observing the typical ceremonies, virtually denied and rejected the efficacy of the substitution, and thus perished in his unbelief. But the retaining of the latter in no respect involved a denial of the Christ, being neither shadow swallowed up in the substance, nor type fulfilled in the antitype, nor ceremonial obligation substituted for another and more significant symbol. If we think otherwise, we charge God with mutability of purpose and infirmity of practice; we presume, that He framed regulations that they might be causelessly annulled, and continued gifts, that they might be needlessly withheld. The very nature of the Jewish ordinances of sacrifice and circumcision evinces, that the wilful persisting in their observance, after the Saviour whom they foreshadowed had come, was to assert the superiority of the symbol over the thing signified, the works of the law over the faith of the gospel, and so to reject the only Mediator between God and man. But how could the use of instrumental music in any way interfere with the most implicit belief in the Christ? and if not, what greater absurdity than to lay it under an interdict, merely because the Israelites employed it in their worship in obedience to a divine command? Is not that very command, the repeal of which has never been made either directly or indirectly, by express caution or general prohibition, based as it is upon the inflexible character of God's unchangeableness, a mighty argument for its introduction in all our services? If it be assumed, that the use of instruments in public worship has been virtually, though not expressly repealed, what has been substituted in its place? We see that it has once been commanded.

The word of God perishes not like the creatures of a day. Once passed, it will have an eternal fulfilment. All the ceremonial observances still exist, not indeed in their original form, but embodied in the Messiah —not one jot or tittle of them has fallen to the ground. Can the Messiah also be said to enclose instrumental music in his own person? The very supposition is absurd. How can the expression typify the object of praise. Yet to such conclusions must those be carried, who determine at all hazard to number instrumental music in the list of the abrogated Jewish ceremonies.[1]

'The praising God,' says an old writer, 'if rightly considered, is an essential part of the moral law, which can never be abrogated; and the performance of it by singing is as lawful as by speaking. For what is singing, but a melodious way of speaking? more affecting, more awakening our natural passions, and more expressive of their joy. And if singing the praises of God Most High be as lawful as speaking them, is it not equally lawful, to call in the best helps and assistances to the voice, in one manner of pronunciation, as is usual in the other? Such helps are musical instruments, which being mere instruments have no voice of their own, *have neither speech nor language*, and therefore cannot offend: yet are they formed to assist the voice of the singer, to fill up, soften, or relieve its intermissions; and in general to sweeten it by the union or correspondence of their symphonies. To this end were they invented, and to this end have they been used as most

[1] 'They which,' says Hooker, 'under pretence of the law ceremonial abrogated, require the abrogation of instrumental music, approving, nevertheless, the use of vocal melody to remain, must shew some reason wherefore the one should be thought a legal ceremony and not the other.' Eccl. Pol. Book V. sect. 38.

grateful assistants, in singing praises unto God, before the giving of the law, before the flood.' [1]

Those who stigmatize instrumental music as a carnal enjoyment, and conceive it to be inconsistent with the spiritual nature of our services, must argue upon the assumption, that God, at one period of his moral government of the world, admitted of the mere form without the spirit of devotion. This however contradicts not only the essential and immutable attributes of Jehovah, but the spirit and language of every part of the Sacred Volume. How often does he not warn the Israelites, that their offerings were abomination, unless the spirit accompanied the act? And while David enjoins repeatedly the use of every kind of instrument in the public thanksgiving, how does he not distinguish between the affections and the mere mode of expression: 'Give thanks, O Israel, unto God, from the ground of the heart.' If the carnality consist in the mere material of which the instruments are made, the condemnation indeed applies. But then vocal prayer must be anathematized as well as instrumental music—for no one can deny that the tongue, as well as every other member of the body, is in the literal sense a carnal instrument. And if no offering may be presented to God, but what is purely spiritual—what remains for us, but to cast aside at once in our public assemblies every exercise of the godlike qualities of speech and reason, and present no nobler spectacle than that of animals ruminating in the fields? Though it is the soul that must magnify the Lord, and the spirit that must rejoice in God our Saviour, yet they do so by instruments of divine endowment. Nor can we hope to discover a mode of worshipping God

[1] Bisse's Rationale, p 16.

without the use of means, so long as we live in a world which every where presents to us objects of sense, and in which it is impossible to stir from the place where we are, without moving some carnal instrument, and exercising some carnal perception.

So far however from music being, in any sense, a peculiarly carnal entertainment, 'of all inventions formed for the gratification of human nature, it is the most spiritual, and fitted for men of the most spiritual and elevated affections. There are pleasures, that are calculated for carnal sensual men, which fill their minds with dross, and by no imaginary metamorphosis, turn them into brute beasts of the earth, into earth itself. Whereas music is allowed to sit among, or rather above human pleasures, as a refiner: it raises the mind and its desires above their low level, drives out,' with the divine blessing, 'carnal thoughts and inclinations: it lifts us up as into heaven, and fits us for the society of heaven. For this reason, it is so highly honored by the Spirit of God, as to be represented as used in the worship of the heavenly choir, composed of angels and glorified Saints, who must be acknowledged more spiritual than any saints upon earth, and to worship more 'in spirit and in truth.'[1]

If the charge of carnality be brought against instrumental music, merely because it pleases the outward senses, Hooker, supported by the authority of St. Basil, will afford us an answer: 'They must have hearts very dry and tough, from whom the melody of the Psalms doth not sometime draw that wherein a mind religiously affected delighteth. Be it as Rabanus Maurus observeth, that at the first the Church in this exercise was more simple and plain

[1] Bisse's Rationale, p. 17.

than we are ; that their singing was little more than only a melodious kind of pronunciation ; that the custom which we now use, was not instituted so much for their cause which are spiritual, as to the end that into grosser and heavier minds, whom bare words do not easily move, the sweetness of melody might make some entrance for good things. St. Basil himself acknowledging as much, did not think that from such inventions, the least jot of estimation and credit thereby should be derogated. ‘ For,’ saith he, ‘ whereas the Holy Spirit saw that mankind was unto virtue hardly drawn, and that righteousness is the least accounted of by reason of the proneness of our affections to that which delighteth ; it pleased the wisdom of the same Spirit, to borrow from melody that pleasure which, mingled with heavenly mysteries, causeth the smoothness and softness of that which toucheth the ear, to convey as it were by stealth, the treasure of good things into man’s mind.’ [1]

Certain passages in the Fathers have been urged with much vehemence against instrumental music ; but the examples already quoted, may shew that the cautious use of instruments in the public service during the first centuries, by no means proceeded from a total condemnation of such auxiliaries in an exercise of praise. The classical instruments, the tibia, the cithara, and the lyre, however becoming when applied to the Drama, were too frivolous for the grave tones of Church music ; and, as they brought with them a fondness for theatrical entertainments, were severely condemned by the early Fathers. The dread of abuse did indeed cause some to inveigh against music altogether, as designed only for a state of childhood, and therefore permitted to

[1] Eccl. Pol. Book V. sect. 38.

the Jews. 'But we must always distinguish between the reasonings, and the testimonies of the original conveyers of the Christian religion. In their reasonings, they have no more advantage than other men, especially when they lived at any distance from the Apostolic times, and were therefore any way suspected of not keeping close to the arguments of that age, whose traditions they pretend to gather by their reasonings. For of these we can also judge as well as they, whether they were agreeable to the reasonings to which the Holy Ghost accommodated his Revelations, that they might be rightly understood, in the sense in which he intended them.' Now, 'there were none in the age, wherein the Holy Ghost was pleased to publish his revelation relating to the peculiar constitution of the Gospel, that ever reckoned instrumental music among the rudiments and elements of the childish state. On the contrary, its being mentioned by the Apostle in heaven shews, that it was impossible by the reasonings of that age, that it should have been so reckoned. For *there* all are supposed to have arrived to 'the fulness of the measure of the stature of Christ.' Nor can I understand, how the Apostles themselves could be excused from this notion of childishness, whilst they communicated with the instrumental music of the Temple, if the bare observance of that music had been taken for an element and rudiment of children. These reasonings from the sense and practice of the Apostolical time and writers, are far more certain for proving the sense of that age—than the reasonings from the sense of those Fathers who, however superior to us, were yet confessedly later than the age of greatest authority, that of the Apostles.'[1]

[1] Treatise concerning the lawfulness of Instrumental Music in Holy Offices, by Henry Dodwell. p. 72.

The experience of centuries has fully proved the expediency and fitness of the application of instrumental music to Christian worship. Wherever its influence has extended, it has been found in all ages a most useful handmaid to devotion. The instruments are themselves good—the taste is also good, unless perverted by Satan—the music, of which they are the servants, has a natural power to conduce to edification ; why then is not the language of the Psalmist applicable in our day: '*It is a good thing* to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High,—to shew forth thy loving kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night, upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery : upon the harp with a solemn sound : for thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work : I will triumph in the works of thine hands.' [1]

The very general love for sweet sounds, which exists in the human mind, has induced some to denounce instrumental and artificial music, as a grand ally of Satan. It cannot be denied indeed, but there may be individuals in a congregation so completely engrossed with the music of the anthem, as to be unmindful of the aim, as well of its introduction, as of their own attendance in the house of God. But such generally speaking, will be found among the worldly and thoughtless, who frequent the church merely from custom, novelty, or carnal pleasure. It may be doubted whether any instance has occurred, in which one, under the tuition of the Spirit, has been enticed, by the performance of an anthem, to fall back into sinful compliances with the world. Like every other blessing, it has its attendant temptations ; but so long as it possesses power to impart

[1] Psalm xcii. 1—4.

edification, it may not surely be blamed for the madness of those who imbibe poison from a flower. 'If it carrieth away some men with the pleasure of the note; so for a recompense, it causeth some others to give greater heede and attention to the matter: even as the sounde of a trumpet in the warre is to the dastardly and white-livered knight a cause of fear, but to the valiant soldier a hartening and encouragement. Wherefore for a finall answere unto these, meethinkes a man out of their own wordes may gather this goode collection against them. Singing in the church they allow: whereupon I inferre, if the worst sort of singing be allowable in church, then the better much rather. But artificial Musicke much better than their plain musicke, for it striketh deeper, and worketh more effectual in the hearers—therefore much rather is it to be allowed in God's congregation.'[1]

The grand musical instrument employed in our churches is the organ, which, like

> A secret world of wonders in itself,
> Sounds His stupendous praise.

While however this most magnificent of instruments cannot be held in too high estimation, there seems a restless jealousy of the introduction of others, as auxiliaries in our public services. It might be supposed, that the organ so fully combined all musical powers and properties in its own compass, that it could receive no augmentation of influence from extraneous assistance. This however is far from

[1] Praise of Musicke, p. 143. 'There is no one,' says Bedford, 'who thinks instrumental musick to be absolutely necessary in the worship of God: but I think it necessary, that the Apostle's rule should be observed in this, as well as in other cases:' 'Let not him that hath it despise him that hath it not; and let not him that hath it not, judge him that hath it.' Rom. xiv. 3. The Temple Musick, p. 229.

being the fact. As a single instrument, it has no compeer for power and effect, arising from its combining imitations of many other instruments, and causing them all to be operated upon by one performer, through the same principle of action. But these imitations, taken separately, are greatly inferior to the genuine instruments which they resemble, not only as to the character of the tone itself, but also as to the general effect; which, in the former case, is, in a great measure, mechanical, and in the latter, the genuine product of human ability and feeling. Thus, not to mention such fanciful stops as the Vox Humana, which is hardly an apology for the vilest burlesque upon the human voice,[1] the trumpet-stop, when heard alone, cannot be compared to the real trumpet, although in combination, it gives brilliancy and effect, not altogether unlike the thrilling tones of the instrument it personifies. And so with many others. The inability of the separate stops to compete with the originals after which they are named, may be perceived in any orchestral performance, wherein the superior acuteness and vigour of the latter overpower completely the corresponding tones of the former, and pierce shrill through the rolling thunder, which serves however to unite, mellow, and fill up the many sounds of the many-voiced instruments.

But the main advantage obtained by the addition of other instruments is, that they serve to remedy a defect, perhaps the only defect closely interwoven with the very system of the organ. Whoever is acquainted with its properties and mechanism must

[1] 'With respect to mine own feelings,' says Burney, 'I confess that of all the stops I have yet heard, which have been honored with the appellation of vox humana, no one in the treble part has ever reminded me of any thing human, so much as of the cracked voice of an old woman of ninety, or in the lower parts, of punch singing through a comb.' Present State of Musick in Germany, &c. Vol. II. p. 305.

know, that 'like the harpsichord, it is incapable of expressing those delicate gradations of forte and piano, diminuendo and crescendo, which add such peculiar grace to accentual melody.'[1] We have already referred to this defect in treating of psalmody, and endeavoured to show of how slight importance it is, in accompanying a plain psalm-tune. Anthems, however, being both lighter in their movements, and more expressive in their character, must suffer by an accompaniment inadequate to imitate the delicate touches of a fine taste and flexible voice. Most other instruments can adapt their tones to the expressions of the singer—the piano-forte derives its very name from this property—and the violin has it in still greater perfection. There is no need of breaking into a passage in order to thrust in stops, and again causing a rude rush of sound by suddenly jerking them out—there is no internal noise of machinery, and rattling of keys and wooden pedals, by way of preparation for a soft passage—and they possess a certain delicacy of character of which even the swell is ignorant. Hence while the organ has a part in a general chorus, which nothing else can supply, in combining and bearing onwards the various sounds, the other instruments form the best accompaniment for the human voice.

It has been objected, that the introduction of violins gives too secular a character to a sacred performance. This however may be doubted. There is nothing in the instrument, when performed in union, to excite 'merriment' in the common sense of the term. There is a wide distinction between the 'jocund rebeck,' which Milton represents as cheering

> 'Many a youth, and many a maid,
> Dancing in the chequered shade,'

[1] Mason's Essays, p. 73.

and a complete set of violins, first, second, tenor, and violoncello, which, when united, as they should be, if introduced on a sacred occasion, form but one instrument. No one is ever reminded, when listening to a quartett of Haydn, of the twanging of a kit at a country wedding. When combined, they are as capable of expressing sorrow as joy, devotional as profane sentiments; and when mellowed by the full tones of an organ, almost soothe the fastidious dread of an unecclesiastical innovation.[1] Another objection is started by Mason, grounded upon the assumed 'dissimilarity of tone and temperament between stringed and wind instruments. He asks whether any 'cognoscente, when he has heard the finest quintetto of Haydn, executed by four of the first violins in the kingdom, and the finest violoncello, would desire it to be repeated with a duplication of the parts performed by flutes, or hautboys and a bassoon?' And again; 'what makes the music on the parade in St. James's Park so constantly attract the general ear in so singular and pleasing a manner?'[2] Nothing is less decisive than such references to taste. Each performance would no doubt be excellent and unique of the kind; and, when highly gratified, no one would approve of experiments tried upon the subjects of his pleasures. If no further proof can be given of the evil junction of wind and stringed instruments, it were not difficult to make a counter reference to taste, in the full performance of one of Handel's grand choruses. Who, it might be asked, would willingly dispense with either the wind or the

[1] A solitary violin is not necessarily an unecclesiastical instrument. Who feels the subject of the Redeemer's humiliation at all injured, by the exquisite violin-accompaniment of Handel's pathetic air,—'He was despised and rejected of men?'

[2] Essays on Church Music, pp. 76, 77.

stringed instruments on such an occasion? Who ever feels his musical perceptions at all stumbled with their union? These idle references to taste however can evidently prove nothing; and while the confluence of wind and stringed instruments so highly delights, and produces so splendid an effect, it is difficult to conceive in what sense they can be deservedly said 'miserably to injure each other.' [1]

In country places, as has been already noticed, instruments are introduced without much discrimination; though the violin is very properly excluded, since, beside its weakness as a solitary instrument, its continued use to wait upon the drunken ditties, trolled forth in the alehouse, or regulate the dances that grace a village festival, renders it a very unfit medium for Sabbath praise. We have before stated, why many instruments are hardly adviseable in a country church. If they cannot be played with some degree of decorous taste, they had better be omitted. In our towns and cities, however, it is certain that a much bolder use of general instruments upon solemn occasions would have an advantageous effect. It may readily be conceived, that a full orchestra must greatly surpass even a large organ in intensity of interest. And since, if feelings are at all supposed vehicles of blessing, whatever produces the most lively and lasting impression on the mind is the most valuable handmaid to religion, we may well ask, whether it is wise in us, to stint ourselves unnecessarily in our application of music to a devotional purpose, when Satan hesitates not to employ every means to the

[1] Mason might have readily accounted for the peculiar pleasure to which he referred, without quarrelling with the combination of wind and stringed instruments. The reason is evident. What is composed expressly for stringed does not suit wind instruments, and vice versa: but a full chorus is intended for the accompaniment of both, and is imperfect without their union.

attainment of his unrighteous ends. Why upon days of festive solemnity, no instrument should be used but the organ, there seems no manner of cause. Trumpets, horns, violins, clarionetts, have nothing in their own character unecclesiastical, nor are they so greatly perverted by theatrical adaptations, as to have lost their right to a Christian use. Abroad they are employed in many churches, unfettered by needless jealousies; and in consequence produce the designed effect, without the intrusion of secular associations. Their occasional and cautious introduction, upon days of festivity, could hardly fail to conduce to the pleasure and edification of the people.

III. The length of time occupied in performance is made by some another ground of objection to the anthem. The validity of this objection must depend in a great measure upon the degree of benefit derivable to the congregation. If none can be obtained, then the minutest particle of time spent in its exercise were too extended—and on the other hand, few would desire to restrict it, so long as it excites devotional feeling. Still, even when the interest remains unabated, and the soul, elevated in its rapture, mourns at the close, the failure of that stay upon which it has imped the wings of its devotion, like every other earthly occupation, it must have its limit. Where many duties are included in the same service, there must be a reciprocal sacrifice, and balancing of time. A part should bear and retain its due proportion to the whole. The duty we owe to God is so comprehensive and important, that, when we enter his courts, and are conscious of the infirmity of our nature, we feel as though we had to crowd the concerns of eternity into a moment. Confession of sins in all their minuteness and magnitude—the

presentation of the various wants of individuals, communities, and nations—the pleading the numerous promises made by God to his people—the proclamation of the everlasting Gospel, in the whole range of revealed truths, practical and doctrinal, prophetical and mystical—the ascription of praise in all its particularities, which are 'as the sands of the sea shore innumerable'—how can all these subjects of devotion, each of which would give meditation for a life, be comprised in the brief term bounded by the obstinate frailty of our nature? Our Church indeed, in addition to the allowances made for human infirmity by the judicious variation of her services, has so condensed the subjects of spiritual interest, as to comprehend most of them in one act of devotion. But even in her case, such is the weakness of the flesh, that often the Saviour may say to her members, as he said to his disciples: 'What! canst thou not watch with me one hour?'

In determining then the length of any particular act of worship, we ought to ascertain its relative importance, the degree in which it conduces to edification, the time required for its proper developement, and the period to which it may be extended without occasioning weariness. If the anthem were thus estimated, a much longer time would certainly be devoted to it, than is generally permitted. But when there is taken into the account, that all feel not the same interest in music—that some, though musical, are not prepared to accompany with a spiritual understanding—that some are scrupulous, some naturally restless, and others perfectly unmusical—that moreover the length of most other parts of the service is determined by canonical or prescriptive authority—policy as well as propriety seem to reduce the Anthem to narrow bounds. Still from five to ten minutes,

or if extended, on solemn occasions, a quarter of an hour, could surely be grudged in no church. The people would hail with peculiar delight such opportunities of thanksgiving, and would evince by crowded attendance, how welcome was the announcement: 'Ye shall have a song, as in the night, when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the Mighty One of Israel.'[1]

IV. Another general objection has been drawn from a partial and particular abuse; and an evil, which was purely accidental, has, from an ignorance of the art, been assumed inherent in this species of composition. Thus the anthem has been denounced too light and airy for so sacred a place as the House of God, and therefore not likely to encourage a truly devotional spirit. No one however who understands its character can imagine, that lightness, rapidity, and ornament, form its essential properties, however justly some anthems may deserve the accusation. Where a particular effect is designed, as for instance to produce feelings of awe and intense devotion, the most powerful anthems have a solemnity, slowness, and simplicity, which cannot be surpassed by the chorale. Others again are more spirited and fluent, but not therefore necessarily light and unecclesiastical. It must indeed be evident to all, that the character of the accusation must vary according to the previous habits and prejudices of the accuser. The English are universally allowed to be more jealous in this particular, than either the Italians or Germans; and indeed the very character of the nation forms a tolerable guarantee, that our anthems shall never verge into the licentiousness of the Italian school. Hence

[1] Isaiah xxx. 29.

the genuine English anthem, so far from deserving the character ascribed to it by those who can conceive no music in church beyond a dragging psalmody, has been considered by competent judges, to possess in many cases a heavy and unmeaning character, from its almost total destitution of air—and to present room for improvement, in some approximation to the more melodious style adopted by our continental neighbours. In this particular, and perhaps in this alone, our music declares its nationality—slow, sedate, deliberate, and somewhat tinged with apathy. Our attachment to these prosy pieces is moreover fostered, by a reluctance to admit other instruments beside the organ, which requires much tortuous ill treatment, before it can condescend to act the principal part in a movement decidedly theatrical. Abroad there exist not the same prejudices; and hence a greater lightness of air is encouraged from the use of many instruments, which boldly execute rapid and ornamental movements, strange perhaps to an English ear, but not ill calculated to convey edification to an unprejudiced German audience.

It may be difficult indeed to decide between the musical customs of different nations. We are apt to pronounce hastily in favour of our own—and foreigners may be equally tenacious of theirs. It is probable that in this, as in every other instance, the golden mean may be advantageously sought. The continental nations might profit by a little of our stateliness and sobriety; and we might be no losers either as to edification or general interest, by admitting some slight measure of their characteristic sprightliness. We ought to be the more ready to reform, as we cannot be ignorant of our national infirmity—a too great fondness for our own customs, and contempt for those of other nations. It is doubtless undesirable, that ecclesiastical

music, which has been already admitted to have a character of its own, should be brought into peril of approximation with theatrical. But in music, as in manners, there is a wide distinction between cheerfulness and levity. Who shall determine where the exact point lies?

Having thus considered the popular objections to the anthem, it may be well to notice a few evils with which it has to contend.

The first is: the wilful ignorance of those, in whose hands is vested a sort of unlimited power to admit or regulate this part of the service. We have already noticed the recommendation of the Rubric, to introduce the anthem after the third collect in the Morning and Evening services. 'What that Hymn or Anthem shall be,' says Beveridge, 'is not appointed by the Church, but is left to the discretion of the one who presides there, to choose such an one as he shall judge most proper to set forth the glory of God in general, or upon any particular occasion that shall offer itself.'[1] The clergyman therefore has the duty committed to him, with this only restriction, that the subject of the Anthem shall be taken from the Prayer-book or Bible, according to the Act of 2nd and 3rd of Edward VI. c. 1. 'Provided that it shall be lawful for all men, as well in Churches, Chapels, or other places, to use openly any Psalms or Prayers taken out of the Bible at any due time, not letting or omitting thereby the service or any part thereof, mentioned in the said book.' As the responsibility then rests with the clergyman, it surely behoves him to make himself acquainted with the genius of such compositions, as he presumes to offer for the people's edification. The Church recommends

[1] Defence of the Old Singing Psalms.

to him the Anthem. To reject it utterly, without examination, is to set up his own uninformed opinion, in opposition to the discretion of the Reformers. If he adopts it—his choice as to the particular anthem must be determined by his judgment; but what reliance can be placed upon that judgment, when it is incompetent to decide according to knowledge? Hence the evil of a clergy uneducated in music. For it may be observed, that those who chiefly raise this outcry against the anthem, are such as have never sought to acquire the most common principles of the art. If a man would show sufficient respect for his Church's approval, as to qualify himself by study and exercise for forming an opinion upon the properties of the anthem—separating the good from the base by a judicious selection,—taking advantage of every festive or solemn occasion to introduce it with careful and suitable performance,—watching with jealousy its character,—and ascertaining with care its real influence to edification—then would his opinion be worthy of attention, and his judgment of respect.

Another evil, with which the anthem has to struggle, arises from the frequent character of the performance. Not merely are its beauties clouded by want of expression, rapidity, and general inaccuracy, but it is made to minister to vanity and conceit. This has served, perhaps more than any other circumstance, to keep alive the prejudices against it. Those who have no knowledge of music are very apt to confound composition with performance, and conceive that a failure of effect, must proceed, solely from the innate demerits of the anthem. If you call upon an individual to particularize his general objection, you are favoured with a long detail of offences from incoherence, display, violence of gesture, and other causes,

all of which are resolvable into a clumsy and incorrect style of performance. Thus, if a clergyman is not aware of this distinction, or able accurately to mark it, he may naturally be tempted to condemn, without discrimination, the whole proceeding. If otherwise, he would see the necessity of taking upon himself the direction of the choir, and, by frequent rehearsals, ensuring at least propriety and accuracy of execution. He would thus be able to determine what failings were to be ascribed to the composition, and what to the performance,—what were essential, and what accidental,—and although he might see reason to reject many anthems as unsuitable, he would discover his precipitancy in condemning this species of composition to account, not merely for its own infirmities, but for the gratuitous blunders and fopperies of the execution. For 'the deepest dye may be stained, and the best gift abused; The tuning of the voyce and strings may turne to the jarre and discorde of manners, as well as rhetoricke pleade untrueths, and logicke prove impossibilities.'[1]

In justice therefore to the anthem, it is of importance, that performers should play and sing simply as the composer intended, seeking to enter into the spirit of the piece, and not presuming to add self-devised embellishments, which are almost sure to be either ill-placed or ill-imagined. The value of simplicity and a devotional spirit in sacred music has been already adverted to. There is one grievance however in connection with these observations, of which the Anthem has especial cause to complain. A liberty is occasionally assumed of ushering in some masterly composition,—taken perhaps from a more extended opera, and possessing a relative value,

[1] Praise of Musicke, p. 25.

of which it is impossible to judge, when presented in an isolated form,—by an extempore prelude. Thus when the magnificent 'Gloria in excelsis' of Pergolesi is performed—one of the few specimens of foreign masters introduced into our churches—no one could possibly imagine from the sickly and sentimental symphony which frequently precedes it, that he is about to be greeted with this beautiful effort of vivid genius. And indeed whatever might be the character of the prelude, in this instance it is peculiarly unhappy, as the anthem opens with a sudden burst of rapturous thanksgiving. In general, where the composition is by some master-spirit, since the performers will hardly be so presumptuous as to hope to improve upon his genius, they will least offend against good taste and good manners, by an exact copy of their original.

Another act of injustice towards the anthem is the infrequency of its introduction. It was evidently the original design, that it should form a part in the daily service, as well in our parochial as cathedral churches. Thus its character would have been generally well understood, and whatever properties for edification it possessed, easily developed. Instead of being treated as a species of musical excrescence, it would have borne its proper relation to the whole service, and, by being considered as art and part of it, have escaped that licentiousness of condemnation, to which it is frequently exposed. Freed from a charge of novelty, it would have excited, neither prejudice on the one hand, nor idle admiration on the other. But now what is the treatment it generally receives? In most places, if it be not totally rejected, it is admitted, merely for a secular purpose, to swell out the funds of some charity, by enticing wealthy individuals to attend the deserted temple,

from the prospect of amusement, instead of devotion, —thus hired almost avowedly as a species of decoy, instead of a stated ecclesiastical means of spiritual profit. On such occasions, popularity rather than propriety regulates the choice of the composition. Singers and performers are procured from other places.[1] The season is dignified with the name of 'the grand musical festival,' and much that is irreverent and profane triumphs for the time in the sacred place of God's tabernacle. It is not the object of this work to advocate worldly performances of this character—not necessarily worldly, but rendered so by the irreverence, or injudiciousness of the parties concerned. It is difficult to say, whether the anthem has to complain more of such perversions, or of the almost total neglect of it at other times. Both serve to overwhelm it under unmerited censure. It has no opportunity to assert its genuine properties, and thus a congregation can know little of its character as a spiritual exercise.

It were unquestionably to be wished, that the great festivals should be marked by such peculiarity in the church services, as might arrest the popular attention. This is indeed not entirely disregarded. The liturgy is slightly varied. Proper psalms and lessons are appointed—the sacred edifice is crowded with chaplets

[1] Such persons, many of whom are morally unfit to officiate in a holy place, might be questioned as to their right, thus to obtrude themselves, on a sacred occasion, into the service of the Church.

'what needeth she,
That is so great a shepherdess herself,
And hath so many shepherds in her see,
To hear thee sing, a simple, silly elf?
Or be the shepherds which do serve her laisie,
That they list not their merry pipes apply?
Or be their pipes untuneable and craisie,
That they cannot her honour worthily?'

SPENCER'S COLIN CLOUT'S COME HOME AGAIN.

of ever-green and laurel,[1] and at Easter, select passages of Scripture are substituted in place of the Invitatory Psalm. Since then, it cannot be expected, and perhaps, is hardly desirable, that anthems should be performed every Sabbath-day in our parochial churches, what admirable opportunities do not these seasons present for their effective introduction! Then truly every exertion should be made to let the anthem plead its own cause, and to prepare such a sacrifice as may comport with the beauty of the general service. Frequent practice, hallowed by prayer under the direction of a judicious clergyman, would serve to endear such seasons equally to the choir and congregation. Nor should the anthem be stinted either as to time or execution. Scope should be given to it. It should not, as is too frequently the case, be hurried over by the flying finger of a timid organist, who sees the minister shewing symptoms of impatience, lest his sermon might be curtailed; but having been previously well-considered and rehearsed, it should demand time for its proper developement. As for execution, there is no reasonable cause why as many instruments should not be admitted, as the piece may demand, and the capacities of the choir attain; or why any association of sound should be shunned, which may accord with the sanctity of the place, and the edification of the people. Why might not each solemnity of the kind be an imitation of the festive celebration of the first Sabbath, as pictured by our Milton;

> 'Not in silence holy kept: the harp
> Had work, and rested not; the solemn pipe,

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[1] 'round altar, niche, and shrine,
The festive ever-greens entwine,
And a dark brilliance cast.'
Christian Year, p. 373.

> And dulcimer, all organs of sweet stop,
> All sounds on fret by string or golden wire
> Tempered soft tunings, intermixed with voice
> Choral or unison.' [1]

'Methinkes,' says a writer already quoted, 'if I bee not much affectioned, they do great injurie to the worde of God, in that they can contentedly permit it to be songe plainly, denying the outward helpes and ornamentes of art, to add more grace and dignitie thereunto.' [2]

A custom may be here noticed, as common in cathedrals, of dispensing, during the season of Lent, with musical accompaniments; and in some instances, discarding the anthem altogether. The idea is interesting, if associated with the oriental mode of expressing deep and inconsolable sorrow, as referred to in many parts of Scripture. Thus the poor Israelites on the banks of the waters of Babylon, 'had no song nor melody in their heaviness.' But whatever may be its origin, it seems connected in many minds, with an erroneous impression, as though music were inconsistent with mournful feelings; the incorrectness of which opinion has been already alluded to. In fact, some of the most masterly and powerful compositions are of a melancholy character; and it is asserted by those who have been present, that no feeling existent is comparable in intensity, to that produced by the anthem performed on Good Friday

[1] Paradise Lost, Book VII. 594—599.

[2] Praise of Musicke, p. 136. 'Therefore they that will have for their own solace the most curious musick both of voice and instruments: and will allow for the service of God only a little poor plain-song, and that ofttimes corrupted and disgraced with harsh discords, untuneable voices, and other like musick-solæcisms (which cannot but be tedious and offensive, even to the meanest and simplest of the multitude), are like, methinks, those irreligious sacrificers, that offered to God the halt and the blind, Deut. xv. 21, and kept the fairest and the fattest of the cattail for themselves.'—*The Principles of Musick, by Charles Butler*, p. 112.

in the Sistine chapel at Rome. Why then neglect the aid of music at a time of such spiritual interest, from some vague emulation of the customs of other times and countries?[1] 'Why is it,' remarks a modern writer, 'that anthems, chants, services, are suspended and entirely disused throughout that very week, whence music dates its introduction into the Christian church? It was in Passion Week, on the night immediately preceding the day of crucifixion, that our blessed Lord sang an hymn with his disciples.'[2]

From the evils denounced in the foregoing pages, may the proper character of the anthem be ascertained. It should be simple, spirited, in good taste, marked with devotional feeling, rich in melody to attract attention, and solemnizing that attention with abounding ecclesiastical harmonies. Its performance should be modest and yet animated, free from affected ornaments, and characterized by strict fidelity and truth of expression. When an anthem has been well chosen, diligently rehearsed, and reverentially performed, it should not unnecessarily be made to yield to some more modern composition. If it have really the essentials of a good anthem, it will not lose by frequent repetition. Repetition may be the means of renewing former edifying impressions, and recalling times of spiritual refreshment. It is not meant, that the church should needlessly confine herself in her choice; but as the time is so short, and the range of really devotional compositions so limited, it were surely better to repeat the old well-tried anthem, than be ever, like the Athenians, restless after something new. The present state of our ecclesiastical music can afford few pieces deserving to rank with

[1] See allusions to this custom. Christian Year, pp. 361, 373.
[2] Minimus. Musical Magazine, Vol. IV. p. 180.

the masterly productions of an earlier age; and the language of our Lord respecting old wine is unquestionably applicable in this case: 'No man having drunk old wine, straightway desireth new; for he saith, the old is better.'[1] It may be asserted, that where this grasping after novelties exists, either in the choral or other parts of the service of the church, it is a sure sign that the soul does not hunger after heavenly food, but values the anthem, not for its genuine merits as a means of spiritual nourishment, but for its adventitious qualities as a carnal gratification.

> 'Give me that piece of song,
> That old and antique song we heard last night,
> Methought it did relieve my passion much,
> More than light airs and recollected terms,
> Of these most brisk and giddy-pated times.
> It is old and plain.'

It is moreover of great importance, that the words should be well chosen, and so plainly read by the clerk or precentor, that the passage may be readily found in the Bible.

It may be imagined, that the poverty of country churches must in general exclude the anthem. A little examination will show that this is an erroneous idea. The want of instruments, and other causes, must indeed necessarily confine their choice; but few churches, if they knew how to employ the power they possess, need deprive themselves entirely of this means of edification. The species of tunes at present performed in many places, though, in some respects, the most vicious that can possibly be conceived, are yet not altogether presumptuous in claiming the name of anthems and fugues. They take a middle range between the anthem and the psalm-tune, and assume

[1] Luke v. 39.

something of the character of Ariettas. Their style resembles, in a great measure, the canticles or carols, which at the Christmas season, are still, in many parts of the country, trolled forth by wandering companies from house to house. These carols, which were in vogue before the Reformation, and called noels (natalia) from their celebrating the birth of our Lord, had their origin about the time that Latin ceased to be understood among the common people, and, being in the vulgar tongue were held in high estimation. The tunes, evidently formed upon their model, have in fact too much of the character of the anthem for congregational psalmody. They have their parts —treble, alt, tenor, and bass—each singer has his particular notes to take up, his pauses to count, his tones of varied power to measure. And, to do justice to the country choristers, their failure lies not so much in the inability to execute, as in bad taste in selection, and rudeness in the performance. The country anthems are no further deserving of allusion, than as they prove the possibility of teaching even the meanest choir to sing in parts, so that, on any occasion of peculiar solemnity, they may be able to perform a simple and enlivening anthem. Nothing indeed can be more hideous than the common country anthem in its present state ; but the evils, however glaring, are all remediable. The execrable composition may be rejected, and one in better taste substituted ; the coarse style of the execution may in some measure be softened down—the scream, the pert snap, the buzzing bass, the rude and violent pronunciation, the deafening thump of the time-keeper, which resembles that of the tilt-hammer of some furnace, might be kept in subjection to a sounder judgment—and the whole, however inharmonious, is of just so much value, as to evince, that even the

most unpromising parts present sufficient depth of soil to encourage a little labour and culture.

If then a clergyman would really devote himself to his task, and learn properly to estimate the real advantages to be derived from this species of composition—he will find no lack of materials. Difficult might the task be—much pains might be required—but care, patience, perseverance, mildness, and wisdom, would ultimately prevail. Let his choice of anthems be small. Let him be cautious never to confound them with his psalmody: let him practise his choristers diligently, before they presume to present their offering in the great congregation,—not suffering them to come with some crude undigested and indigestible performance, but

> 'All warbling of one song, all of one key,
> As if their hands, their sides, voices, and minds,
> Had been incorporate.'

and he will find that he has gained another and a mighty weapon, in his struggle against the tremendous powers of the Ruler of the Kingdom of this world.

When shall man cease to give his enemies weapons against himself! Surrounded as he is by deadly foes, who employ every nerve and device to overwhelm him by force, or traverse him by guile—

> 'With darkness and with danger compassed round,'

—he enters the armoury of God. There lie before him, soliciting his grasp, weapons of proof, all of which have their particular design of offence or defence in the day of trial. Loud is the warning, which rings in his ears, to arm himself fully for the conflict, for the proclamation has gone forth: 'Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let the men of war draw near; let them come up; beat your ploughshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks

into spears.'[1] Still he hesitates. All are the workmanship of God himself. He presumes however to criticise, and pass his opinion. Some have too high a polish—some are too nearly allied in form to those used by the enemy—others, two-edged, may be dangerous to their possessor—and thus he contents himself with some clumsy battle-axe, or iron-tipped war-club, which, nerved by the Divine arm, may indeed eventually beat down opposition, but not until many a rude blow has been received, which might have been parried, or anticipated by the weapons so wantonly rejected. Yet is the war carried on, and carried on valorously. Men rush on gasping in the unequal conflict. It is no slight skirmish in which they are engaged. Within them and around them are their foes, deadly in hatred, eager for vengeance, filled with all subtlety and deceit. They are admonished again and again to make use of every weapon, and take every advantage afforded them by the great Captain of their Salvation. No. The broad felt is still preferred to a helmet—the enemy has the monopoly of many a warlike engine; and, seeing the Divine armoury deserted, he ventures, in his effrontery, to pillage it of the rejected weapons, turns them against their masters, and makes the bitter edge bite into their sympathies, and flashes the burnished sword before their eyes. Meanwhile still sounds the admonition, and would to God that every one felt its breadth and its beauty: 'Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.'[2]

[1] Joel iii. 9, 10. [2] Phil. iv. 8.

IX.

THE VOLUNTARY.

> The sound
> Of instruments, that made melodious chime,
> Was heard, of harp and organ, and who moved
> Their stops and chords was seen; his volant touch,
> Instinct through all proportions low and high,
> Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue.
>
> MILTON.

THE Voluntary is necessarily unknown to those churches which exclude the organ. Almost every other species of harmony, from the common psalm-tune to the anthem, may possibly be compassed by the sole powers of the human voice; and even long and intricate compositions, though they require some safer guide to ensure correctness and stability, may, with the addition of a few stringed or wind instruments, be effectively performed. The voluntary, however, is the peculiar province of the organ—without it, it has not even existence—and with it, the finest vocal, and richest instrumental accompaniment would but rob it of its beauty. It is an exclusive species of pure instrumental music, and its character is only preserved by being strictly confined to the organ, whose peculiar properties gave birth to it. It may

therefore not be uninteresting to take a cursory view of the history and properties of this remarkable instrument.

We have already seen that instrumental music, having been made a prominent part of the Jewish service, was at first cautiously admitted into the Christian Church, and at length fully established with the establishment of the faith. The instruments employed at this early period were simple in their design and operation—there was no idea of a compound instrument governed by one principle, and responding to the effort of one man. The term organum was variously applied. Thus St. Augustine: 'All musical instruments are called organs, not only that which is slender and blown with bellows, but also every one else of a bodily shape, which is adapted to sing, and which the singer on that account employs.'[1] A Greek epigram in the Anthologia, attributed to the Apostate Julian, who also flourished in the IVth century, affords the most ancient proof of an instrument resembling the modern organ. Burney gives this translation: 'I see reeds of a new species, the growth of another and a brazen soil, such as are not agitated by our winds, but by a blast that rushes from a leathern cavern beneath their roots; while a robust mortal running with swift fingers over the

[1] Essays on Church music by Mason, who adds 'We shall, I think, be under a mistake if we infer from this quotation, that St. Austin, though he mentions bellows, means precisely what we now call an organ, for from the epithet 'gracile' slender, it seems to have been only a kind of organized Syrinx, or an inferior sort of Regalls in fashion about Queen Elizabeth's time, or rather such a portable pneumatic instrument, which, if the word of Mercennus may be depended upon, was represented on an ancient monument in the Mattei gardens at Rome, with a Latin inscription annexed. This represented a little cabinet with a few pipes ranged upon it, and an equal number of keys, on which a female figure is in the act of playing, while on the other side a man blows into the cabinet with a small pair of bellows, exactly like those in present use.'

concordant keys, makes them smoothly dance and emit melodious sounds.' [1]

Of a much earlier date, was an instrument in some respects resembling our organ, termed the Hydraulicon or water-organ, which is said to have been an improvement of Ctesibius, a native of Alexandria, during the time of Ptolemy Euergetes, upon an invention of Plato, called the Clepsydra or water-clock, which played the hours of the night upon flutes.[2]

In the VIth century, the Hydraulicon gave place to the wind-organ, which Cassiodorus thus describes: 'The organ is an instrument composed of divers pipes, formed into a kind of tower, which, by means of bellows, is made to produce a loud sound: and in order to express agreeable melodies, there are in the inside, movements made of wood, that are pressed down by the fingers of the player, which produce the most pleasing and brilliant tones,' [3] In the VIIth century, the Organ is said to have been first introduced at Rome, by Pope Vitalian—and in the next, it found its way into France as a present to King Pepin from Constantine Copronymus, Greece claiming the honor of its invention. During the Xth century, according to Mabillon and Muratori, it had spread through Italy, Germany, and England; and, being admitted into all the convents of Europe, served to foster those seeds of musical genius, which, for want of opportunity, had hitherto been buried in monastic seclusion.

We may learn from the description, by Wolfstan, of an organ erected in Westminster during the same century, what progress had then been made towards its present state of perfection. It would seem, that as many men and as much exertion were required to

[1] History of Music, Vol. II. pp. 65, 66. [2] Ibid. Vol. I. p. 490.
[3] Ibid. Vol. II. p. 66.

work the wind, as would now be necessary to man a frigate :

> 'Twelve pair of bellows, ranged in stated row,
> Are joined above, and fourteen more below,
> These the full power of seventy men require,
> Who ceaseless toil, and plenteously perspire,
> Each aiding each, till all the wind be prest
> In the close confines of the incumbent chest,
> On which four hundred pipes in order rise,
> To bellow forth the blast that chest supplies.'[1]

William of Malmesbury, who flourished in 1120, describes an organ which would seem to have been worked by the application of steam. Mason thus translates the passage : 'By the violence of hot water, the wind or steam (ventus) coming out, fills the whole cavity of the instrument ; which, from several apertures passing through brass pipes, sends forth musical noises.'[2]

It is matter of wonder, that an instrument, as to its principle of construction so very simple,—however complicated its mechanism when that principle is applied to a variety of stops,—should have been for so many centuries in a state of such imperfection. 'For the first keys are reported to have been from five to six inches broad, and consequently, though said to be played with the hand, must like the carillons at present in Holland, have required the fist to perform that office. Again the pipes, formed only of brass, must have been so shrill and piercing, that no sounds agreeable to the ear could have been produced by them. Half notes were introduced at Venice so early as the beginning of the twelfth century ; yet the com-

[1] Mason's Essays, p. 38. He supposes that the seventy bellows-blowers kept not their bellows in action all the time of performance, but previously filled the chest with wind, and then left it to be expended, as occasion required.

[2] Mason's Essays, p. 37.

pass of the instrument had not then attained two octaves; nor was its construction so far improved as to render it capable of being played with both hands, till the fifteenth century, according to Gerson, cited by M. de St. Blaise. Pretorius, whose work was printed so late as 1615, asserts, that Registers, by which only a variety of stops could be formed, were not invented till towards the conclusion of the preceding century. From all this, we may justly conclude, that an organ in any degree deserving the name, could not have been fabricated many years before the æra of the Reformation.'[1]

The adoption of a purer faith and simpler ritual did not, in the opinion of our reformers, require the expulsion of the organ. The Church of England therefore has retained it, wherever means and accommodation have been afforded. Nor is she singular in this respect. There is scarcely a Protestant established Church in Europe, (the Scottish excepted) whether the Lutherans of Germany, Denmark, and Sweden, or the Calvinists of Holland and Switzerland, but concur with her in the use of this sacred instrument. Its construction and capabilities are admirably suited to the solemnity and fervor of the Christian services. Had it graced the interior of Solomon's temple, the magnificence of its appearance had been deemed worthy of a distinct and glowing description by the sacred historian. Planted over the grand west entrance, its golden pipes, set in a frame work of cedar, tower towards the roof, rising tier above tier in the most elegant proportions. How richly, as viewed from the altar in some of our larger Gothic edifices, does it terminate the long range of arched windows in the clere-story, which seem, as they lessen in perspective,

[1] Mason on the authority of a work entitled, 'L'art du Facteur des Orgues par D. Bedos de Celles, 1766.' Essays, pp. 38—41.

to meet the fretted roof, and cluster around it like a border of chased silver! Milton, in his description of a magnificent palace framed by angelic power and skill, might seem, by an incidental comparison,[1] to have sketched in his imagination the exterior of his edifice, from the appearance of this instrument.

> 'Anon, out of the earth, a fabric huge
> Rose like an exhalation, with the sound
> Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet,
> Built like a temple, where pilasters round
> Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid
> With golden architrave: nor did there want
> Cornice or freeze, with bossy sculptures graven;
> The roof was fretted gold.'[2]

Then how admirably does the utterance of its voice correspond with the majesty of its exterior! Varying its intonations as though by an act of volition, it now breathes the softest and most mellifluous tones, and again, swelling through every possible gradation of sound, bursts forth 'like the voice of many waters,' in the mighty power of a deafening combination. No instrument on earth can be compared to the organ for fulness, majesty, richness, modulation, and condensation of sound; and no instrument seems therefore so suited to the exclusive adoration of Him, whose 'voice is mighty in operation, and full of majesty.' Perhaps no work of man's device can claim equal power of exciting and arresting the feelings. It not only soothes without inducing languor, and inspirits without administering to licentiousness, but so rivets the senses, as to apply their agency to fill the mind with images of the sublimest realities. A large and powerful organ in the hands of a master, in one of his best moments of musical

[1] As in an organ, from one blast of wind,
To many a row of pipes the sound-board breathes.

[2] Paradise Lost, Bk. I. 708—717.

inspiration, is inferior to no source of the sublime in absorbing the imagination. The rush and concourse of sound has been not inaptly compared to the full and even volume of a mighty river, flowing onwards, wave after wave, occasionally dashing against some rock, till sweeping with momently increasing vehemence to the brow of a precipice, it rushes down, a wide-spreading and overwhelming flood.

> Look back,
> Lo, where it comes like an eternity,
> As if to sweep down all things in its track,
> Charming the eye with dread.

Such was its influence under the finger of the mighty Handel, whose extemporaneous effusions are reported to have almost surpassed those monuments of his power, which awe like the spell of a magician. 'His amazing command of the instrument, the fulness of his harmony, the grandeur and dignity of his style, the copiousness of his imagination, and the fertility of his invention, were qualities which absorbed every subordinate attainment. Silence, the truest applause, succeeded the instant that he addressed himself to the instrument; silence so profound, that it checked respiration, and seemed to control the functions of nature, while the magic of his touch kept the attention of his hearers awake only to those enchanting sounds, to which it gave utterance.'[1]

> 'Strong in new arms, lo! giant Handel stands,
> Like bold Briareus with his hundred hands.'[2]

Still though Handel's voluntaries have descended with him into the tomb, such is the power and majesty of the instrument, that it will at all times draw

[1] Dictionary of Musicians, Vol. I. Art. *Handel.*
[2] Pope's Dunciad.

forth whatsoever genius any age may produce; so that there will probably be no period, but what may claim, if not a Handel, yet at least a Samuel Wesley, who is acknowledged to throw a Handelian spirit into his voluntaries.

'There is something in that wonderful instrument, which the puritan spirit would rashly have assigned over to the enemy, the fulness of sound, without the visible appearance of human agency, which appears singularly adapted to devotional purposes.

> 'When beneath the nave,
> High arching, the cathedral organ 'gins
> Its prelude, lingeringly exquisite
> Within retired the bashful sweetness dwells;
> Anon like sunlight, or the flood-gate rush
> Of waters, bursts it forth, clear, solemn, full;
> It breaks upon the mazy fretted roof;
> It coils up round the clustering pillars tall;
> It leaps into the cell-like chapels; strikes
> Beneath the pavement-sepulchres; at once
> The living temple is instinct, ablaze,
> With the uncontrolled exuberance of sound.'[1]

'The principle of the common whistle is that upon which this magnificent instrument is constructed.' A chest extending the whole length and breadth of the organ is supplied with wind, by the action of a large bellows, placed in the lower part of the instrument. Into the upper part of this chest, termed from thence the sound-board, the mouths of the several pipes are inserted, and respond to the pressure of the key, by the removal of a small valve. 'A good church-organ is usually divided into three parts, or distinct sound-boards—the great organ the choir organ, and the swell. The great organ, is the largest and loudest, and should be the best part of the instrument. The choir-organ is intended to accompany

[1] Quarterly Review, Vol. XXXVIII. p. 26.

the singers, and is therefore small and voiced very soft. The swell or gradual increase of sound is produced, by opening the door of the box in which this part of the choir-organ is enclosed. For this purpose a pedal is provided, having a communication with the sliding door, and by which it may be easily moved up and down by one foot. There is sometimes a fourth division for the pedals, a set of keys with corresponding movements, sound-board and pipes, performed upon by the feet.

'In each of these divisions, there are various longitudinal rows of pipes: which rows, with the movements connected with them, are called stops. A large organ contains from twenty to forty of these stops; and as there are commonly between fifty and sixty pipes in each stop, the whole number of pipes is considerable. The organ in St. Paul's Cathedral contains 1976, of which the largest is sixteen feet in height, and the smallest about half an inch, measuring from the mouth.'[1] The names of the chief stops,—those which form the basis for the rest,—are the open diapason and stop diapason. Upon these all the others, some of which are harmonics[2] of the original notes, and some, imitative reed stops, are built.

[1] Extracted from an article in the Mus. Mag. Vol. IV. pp. 35, 36, written by Dr. Hodges of Bristol.

[2] The compound nature of every clear tone has been already alluded to—concordant sounds at fixed intervals always accompanying the note itself, and termed its harmonics. When we speak therefore of harmonic stops in an organ, we mean that 'their pipes are pitched at harmonic intervals, with the diapason pipes, and thus, though in themselves different, form but one sound.' An organ admirably exemplifies the property of the harmonic system to reduce diversity to identity, multiplicity to unity,—as also the harmonical division of simple unity. It is a curious fact, among many connected with the properties of sound, 'that harmony is more natural than the notes of the octave, for a string cannot be sounded without producing harmony; whereas the notes of an octave never appear but in highly civilized countries. Amongst the birds we hear the 5th, the 4th, the 3rd major and minor; but the notes of the octave from no animal that has not been taught, unless we believe

The above description may be supposed sufficiently general, to be intelligible to the common reader. If however, he would desire a yet more simple and familiar account of the mere principles of the instrument, he may find the following extract from a little pastoral by Bishop Kenn, to answer his purpose.

'JOSEPH. I on this hillock, where your flock 's in view,
Heard pipe and song, yet saw no swain but you:
And which is stranger, though you were alone,
Perceived in the same breath more pipes than one.
JACOB. Joseph, you did.
JOSEPH. Your art, kind friend, disclose.
JACOB. These little brazen pipes are set in rows.
As on these turfs I sit, my foot at will
The little bellows can discharge, and fill
From that conveyance; wind has entrance free
Into each pipe, by putting down the key.
The instrument is a small organ named,
Old Jubal is for the invention famed;
The shepherds well this music understood,
And used it on the plain before the flood.
JOSEPH. You entertain me with a pleasure new,
Till now, what organ was, I never knew,
At first approach, it seemed a wondrous thing;
At once to hear a shepherd pipe and sing.'[1]

The cylindrical or barrel-organ, by which tunes are played mechanically,—the several pipes rendered vocal by the action of certain cylinders, moved with the hand,—is occasionally admitted into churches, in lieu of the finger-organ. The assistance of an organist is thus entirely superseded, as the nature of the instrument enables any individual who possesses arms and ears, to produce and regulate the accompaniment. Still there are objections to its introduction, arising no less from its character, than from the use to which it is elsewhere devoted. The voices of a congrega-

the extraordinary account of the Sloth.'—Stillingfleet's Principles and Power of Harmony, p. 33.

[1] Bp. Kenn's Poems, Vol. IV. p. 324.

tion should be humoured, not impelled. The instrumental sounds should be, in the strictest sense of the word, accompaniment; sufficiently antecedent to direct the voices, and yet perfectly submissive to their necessarily heavy movements,—affording ample time and space for the proper developement of the note, ere they pass on to the next. For this purpose the organist should if necessary sacrifice even the *time;* rendering it subservient to the will, or rather to the powers, of the congregation:—an additional argument for the adoption of full and stately tunes, in which slight variations of time are of small moment. In choral performances indeed, every note should have its exact value; because, as the movements are more rapid and intricate, they demand the utmost accuracy and precision;—an object which is solely attained by performers of some knowledge and practice. The inability however of the general congregation requires, and the simplicity of the chorale permits, that the tune should be played in such a manner, as to accommodate itself to existing infirmities. In fact, as the organist, especially in this particular, ought to consider himself the servant of the congregation, so also should the instrument be strictly serviceable for its purpose. Now it is evident that no mechanical mode of accompanying the voice, can possibly answer this end. The setter of the barrels must arrange his notes according to some stated time, and to that time the instrument must play, and the congregation sing. If the latter fails to observe the time, still the barrel, once set, being unendowed with reason, musical perception, or a capacity of self-acting, must proceed doggedly in its inwrought regularity. And no alternative remains for the congregation, but either to sink into silence, or endure a continued course of wearisome dissonances. This grand objection to

the cylindrical organ is involved in its very construction, and is remediable by no possible invention.[1] Besides, the instrument is necessarily destitute of those thousand delicate and impressive tones, which, responding to the impulses of genuine feeling, issue from the touch of a living finger, and diffuse life and animation throughout an assembly. And as no new tune can be introduced without some expense, a church that is thus hampered remains condemned to the original machine which forms frequently, according to the prevalent taste, so many barrels of legalized error. A further objection arises from the generally secular, and even ignoble use to which the instrument is applied. What town or village in the country resounds not with the most absurd tunes ground out of these musical boxes, which, along with the bagpipe and hurdy-gurdy, are borne by strolling minstrels from place to place! Now although such is their mechanism, that they in some degree ape the sounds of the genuine organ—yet are they easily distinguished by a certain clumsiness of movement peculiar to themselves, perceived as well in their application to a psalm-tune, as to the hunting song of the Der Freischütz—a similarity, calculated to awaken secular ideas, wherever the barrel-organ is introduced. It is of importance to keep separate secular and sacred instruments, as well as compositions; and the almost exclusive application of this species of organ to the service of the world, forms singly a sufficient reason for its exclusion from the precincts of the church. Till lately, the finger-organ was almost entirely confined to sacred purposes; and it is to be regretted, that its powers

[1] It may be questioned whether an instance has ever occurred, in which congregational singing has been improved by the introduction of a barrel-organ.

of combination have induced some to erect it in concert-rooms for the purpose of accompanying compositions of a light, worldly, and even frivolous character. Still this is happily but an exception: and the sound of the organ naturally awakens in the mind feelings of awe and solemnity.[1]

From this rough sketch of the organ, we proceed to notice the particular species of composition, which forms the subject of this essay. As an introduction, however, it may be well to draw an accurate distinction between the voluntary,—which demands peculiar attention, both on account of the time it occupies, and the liberty it assumes,—and the other kinds of extempore playing introduced occasionally into the service. These are the Prelude, the Interlude, and the Coda, or modulations at the close of a tune.

1. The Prelude is the name applied to the extempore chords played by the organist before a psalm or anthem. Though, in many respects, it resembles the voluntary, it lies under restrictions peculiar to itself. It is greatly circumscribed as to time. It forms a part, and a very inferior one, of a whole—it must therefore observe its proper relation, nor trespass beyond the bounds assigned it in the composition. It bears the same proportion to the anthem, as a portico to a house, a prologue to a tragedy, or an exordium to a sermon. Then again it is cramped as to style. It must confine itself to the subject of the piece; or, if some latitude be per-

[1] Bedford complains (Abuse of Mus. p. 208) that at his time the church organ was made the common instrument, upon which 'the young ladies practised their jigs, songs, and every thing that was light and airy.' This was an abuse, which, by its very heinousness has we may hope, been its own corrective. It is however incumbent upon organists in their hours of private practice to remember that, though apparently alone, they are under His eye, who is especially present in 'those places where he hath set His name.'

mitted, it should in no respect violate the character of the composition it is intended to prelude. Where an anthem is totally devoid of introduction, it is well, if the performer possesses both the power and will, to commence with a few opening chords. It prevents the confusion arising from the tardiness of the singers, and is at the same time a pleasing method of preparing the minds of the congregation. In most cases, however, poverty of genius, bad taste, affectation, and want of devotional feeling, render it desirable that organists would not attempt, what they cannot well execute. It is no easy task, and far beyond a common-rate talent to do justice to a masterly composition in an extempore prelude: and no herald is needed to prolong the time occupied by a worthless anthem.

Preludes should be generally soft and harmonious ; whether they usher in a mournful and pathetic, or a more energetic and spirited composition. A few chords, well-introduced, suited to the style of the succeeding piece, or forming, though not servilely, a species of musical analysis, played upon mild stops, would perhaps best subserve spiritual benefit.

> ' The door is closed : but soft and deep,
> Around the awful arches sweep
> Such airs as soothe a hermit's sleep.
> From each carved nook, and fretted bend,
> Cornice and gallery seem to send
> Tones, that with seraph hymns might blend.' [1]

Preluding a psalm with two or three opening chords, if done with judgment, has rather a pleasing effect ; though the best prelude is unquestionably the tune itself, which not only tends to bring the mind into a suitable frame, but informs and prepares the ear.

[1] Christian Year, p. 179.

Some organists however, are apt to overwhelm the tune under every kind of ornamental flourish, so as totally to destroy the intended effect, and deprive the prelude of every advantage, either as a voluntary or psalm-tune.

2. Interludes are short extempore passages between the lines, intended to lead the mind gradually by gentle passing notes from one chord to another, so as to remove the abruptness of sudden transitions. They are not in general use among the organists of the church, who, after a momentary pause, pass on direct to the succeeding chord. Wherever they are admitted, 'they should be short, and suited to the contents of the hymn sung, leading gently and insensibly into the succeeding line. If in any hymn two lines are so connected together, that the usual pause between them would injure the sense, the interlude should not hinder the singer from proceeding without delay.'[1]

3. The Coda at the close of a verse is as common among us, as the interlude is uncommon. It is difficult to determine its design, or whether, under any circumstances, it may not be considered an intrusion. In general, it presents the most unfortunate specimen of native genius. Short and tempting, there is no man, who is able with the aid of a bellows-blower to produce a sound by laying his hand upon the manuals, and his foot upon the pedals, who shrinks from attempting this little voluntary. Many a noble tune is condemned to endure, verse by verse, the most wearisome violations of musical grammar. Sometimes the organist, having by mental prowess, composed two or three chords, is content with a continual rhyming upon the self-same common places. These are better

[1] Preface to the Tune-book of the United Brethren.

than the affected strains of others, who, possessing neither the same modesty, nor the same conviction of incapacity, offend the more grossly, the less they are fearful of offence. Few persons could regret the extirpation of these musical excrescences. However becoming a few chaste concluding chords, it is no satisfaction to an audience, abused by such rhodomontade performances, that this species of instrumental music is capable of effect. It is indeed a question whether it may ever claim the merit of an improvement; and as it forms no actual part of the tune, its absence can hardly occasion, under any circumstances, a feeling of disappointment. [1]

Rousseau furnishes us with an admirable definition of the Voluntary, which he denominates prelude, no French or Italian term being applied peculiarly to this portion of our service. 'The art of preluding on the organ is the faculty of composing and executing extempore pieces, replete with every thing either in design, fugue, imitation, modulation, or harmony, that a composition the most scientific can exhibit. It is principally during such a prelude, that great musicians, then exempted from that extreme sub-

[1] In accompanying a congregation, the organist would do well to weigh the advice given him by Mr. Bedford,—'to play as the congregation sings, as far as the nature of the tune will permit, without any graces and flourishes, except what nature teacheth. When the notes are played with the utmost plainness, every movement of the finger, especially in the bass, directs the congregation to move on to the next syllable, and so they keep time with each other. But when the organist takes his own fancy, this design is lost, and the quick notes only show that he hath some notions of the first four pages in Mr. Godfrey Keller's method for a thorough-bass, whilst the interludes and voluntaries are a plain discovery that the rest of the book is beyond his understanding.' Again—'that he would not play so loud, as to drown the voices of the congregation, that they are not heard. Instruments are designed to direct our voices, and not to drown them. The people learn by hearing others, and taking their pitch from others, whilst the not hearing the voices, is a detriment to the singing.' Abuse of Musick, pp. 241, 242.

serviency to rules, which the critical eye requires them to attend to on paper, produce those brilliant and skilful transitions, which enrapture the ears of an audience. To do this, a perfect mastery of the instrument, a delicate and well-practised finger are by no means all that are sufficient; that fire of genius, that inventive spirit, must be superadded, which instantaneously creates and executes passages the most congenial to harmony, the most seductive to the ear.'[1] Mason however justly remarks upon this definition, that 'however well it applies to a good voluntary generally, it does not sufficiently describe that which is peculiarly calculated for divine service. Other requisites are wanted to give instrumental music, as such, legitimate admission to a devout audience. A musical composition, either premeditated or not, may have all that fire of genius, that inventive spirit, applauded by Rousseau, and yet produce an effect quite opposite to that of tranquillizing the minds of its hearers. It may be too lively, too accented, and tend too much to excite passions, very different from those which are purely devotional. It is necessary therefore, that this ethereal fire be kept in subjection, not so much by the rules of harmonical composition, as by those of prudence and discretion, so that under these guides, its extemporaneous prolusion should flow on with that equable and easy modulation, which, while it gratifies the ear, should not too strongly affect the intellect.' 'I demand,' adds Mason, 'no austere solemnity of strain; but I would reject all levity of air. I require no recondite harmony; but I deprecate too rhythmical a melody.'[2]

We have no means of ascertaining the exact period, when pure instrumental music was permitted to form

[1] Mason's Essays, pp. 44, 45.

[2] Ibid, pp. 46—48.

a part of divine service. The primary use of the organ was undoubtedly to accompany and sustain the vocal chant. When however it had advanced toward its present state of perfection, it was employed by the Romish priests to fill up the intervals between the services of the mass, which were generally sung, and thus enable the choir to recruit its powers. For the same reason, it might have been similarly used in the Protestant churches, and retained when found to conduce to the higher object of general edification, even when the discontinuance of chanting seemed to dispense with the necessity.

The original character of the voluntary would appear to have been purely vocal; as 'between the Reformation and Restoration there was little, if any music printed or published, that could serve as an architype for instrumental Church-music, except such as was intended for the voice. Such organists therefore as were masters of Canon, Fugue, and Counter-point would in these styles only execute their separate office.'[1] The fondness of the age for compositions moulded upon certain arbitrary laws of Counter-point, and abounding in quaint prettinesses, and paper congruities, aptly termed 'music for the eye,' would necessarily characterize these extemporaneous effusions. Hence the first specimens of the voluntary are more remarkable for their servile subserviency to rule, than for richness or originality of musical idea. This plodding submission to systems has its admirers in the present day; and indeed is the only apology which composers, devoid of natural genius can plead for their musical efforts—if dry, they are at any rate correct—if destitute of the kernel, they yet present a polished shell. In all objects

[1] Mason's Essays, p. 54.

of taste, the less natural genius fetters itself with arbitrary restrictions, the better—its splendour amply atones for its irregularity. He must however have a bold, as well as exalted talent, who breaks through customs which time has rendered venerable; and for a long period the voluntary was content to confine itself to the 'grave and fancied descant' which placed all its fame in heavy and ingenious movements. There seemed no idea of that judicious and *natural* combination of melody and harmony, which now characterizes the true voluntary.

The taste of these times, no less than the genius of the organ, served however to foster a species of regular music, which combines within itself all the requisites of a good ecclesiastical voluntary. The fugue, which has been already defined, while it embraces the most harmonious combinations interwoven with the sweetest melody, is at the same time as close and accurate in its structure, as the most rigid mathematician could desire. It has its regular thesis, or proposition, to the subject of which it must strictly confine itself. With this, one of the parts singly commences; after which, while it is proceeding with some consonant passage, the second joins it with the original unadorned theme, and as it pursues its race after the first, the third unites in the same manner, and the fourth, with as many others as the piece admits of, till all chasing each other through different keys, interweaving continually the same subject, run together to the end, 'flying and pursuing transverse through all proportions low and high.'

Milton's description of the 'dance of angels about the sacred hill' happily illustrates the course of 'the resonant fugue.'

> Mystical dance, which yonder starry sphere,
> Of planets, and of fixed, in all her wheels,

Resembles nearest, mazes intricate,
Eccentric, intervolved, yet regular
Then most, when most irregular they seem;
And in their motions harmony divine
So smooths her charming tones, that God's own ear
Listens delighted.' [1]

'The fugue,' says Mason, 'is the best species of music an organist can employ, provided his subject be lofty and sublime, which it can only be by deviating from every thing that is trivial, secular, or common. It has a merit peculiar to itself, which is never so fully perceived, as when executed on the organ by an extempore performer, provided he has all the requisites of invention and execution which Rousseau requires in a good preluder.' [2] This however is more than can be expected in the common class of parochial organists. To compose a spirited and regular extemporaneous fugue is no trivial excellency; and as it is necessarily a difficult and intricate species of instrumental music, no one can complain if he meets with correct and effective performance. Happily the musical world is enriched with many masterly fugues composed expressly for the organ; and no player need deprecate the charge of unskilfulness who has modesty sufficient to prefer the works of Handel, Graun, Bach, and Albrechtsberger, to his own necessarily inferior extemporaneous effusions.[3]

[1] Paradise Lost, Bk. V. 620—627. [2] Mason's Essays, pp. 59, 60.

[3] 'I wonder,' says Bedford 'how any one can perform that in the Church, which would greatly expose his judgment and skill, if it was seen in score. It is much more strange to me, that in many parochial churches, such organists as know not one tittle of composition, and never made a tune in their lives, shall play extempore voluntaries. I think a man may as well expect to hear another read who can't spell, or to hear him spell who does not know his letters. Indeed many times there is not a wanton air, because there is no air at all. But yet the very air is not always excusable. There are very often such scraps of jigs and country dances, according to what the organist hath been acquainted with the week before, as is a profanation of the Church, and may in time bring the service into contempt. There ought to be no

It has been objected to the fugue, that its fluent and even character admits not those accentual inflexions, by which the present mode of vocal and impassioned music is imitated. Yet although neatness of expression and delicacy of feeling may be, in a measure, sacrificed, and although prompt and as it were casual strains ‘ may seem best suited to induce mental serenity,’ still the general indevotion of our organists, who know not how to regulate a melodious style, so as to subserve edification, renders this evil, if an evil it be, the less to be deplored. Till therefore they are influenced by a true sense of responsibility, it were well, that the airy and rhythmical style in which they too often indulge was discouraged, and the fugue in its flowing, easy, and restricted involutions, suffered to occupy the intervals of the service. The greater number possess not that happy inventive faculty which can alone give interest to a lighter style, and ‘ few of those who do possess it are able to restrain it within the bounds which reason and, in this case, religion prescribe.’ [1]

There are, however, some not unskilful organists, who are apt to carry the involved character of the fugue to a tiresome excess—musical pedants, who cannot consent for a moment to suffer an idea to appear in its native dignity and beauty, but must burden it with strained and unexpected harmonies. Such performances may indeed excite astonishment, but it is as unsatisfactory as that of Sir Scudamore, who at a similar exhibition, naturally inquired the cause and end of their ‘ worke and wearie paine,’

military tattoos, no light and galliardizing notes, and nothing to raise a disordered thought, or a wanton fancy. Music is of excellent use in holy offices; but it ought to be well regulated, or otherwise it may be prejudicial, and the best way to regulate it, is to play nothing but what hath been known and approved by able Judgments.’ Abuse of Musick, p. 244.

[1] Mason’s Essays, p. 68.

'But all in vaine;
For they for nought would from their worke refraine,
Ne let his speeches come into their eare,
And eke the breathful bellows blew amaine,
Like to the northern winde, that none could heare.'[1]

Burney met with similar playing abroad, and denounces it. 'The rage for crude, equivocal, and affected modulation, which now generally prevails all over Germany, renders voluntary-playing so unnatural, that it is a perpetual disappointment and torture to the ear; which is never to expect any thing that comes, or to have one discord resolved, but by another. A little of this high sauce, discreetly used, produces great and surprising effects; but for ever to be seeking for far-fetched and extraneous harmony, is giving a man that is hungry nothing but chian to eat, instead of plain and wholesome food.'[2]

When we consider the capabilities of the voluntary for good or evil, we cannot but be struck with the astonishing power reposed in the hands of the organist. The people, during the allotted time, are at his mercy. According to the tenor of his performance, their minds may be solemnized or dissipated, their devotion elevated or repressed, their thoughts sublimed or secularized. He holds over them an enchanter's wand, powerful as the lightning, and almost equally destructive. The salutary impression made by an energetic peroration, has not unfrequently been rivetted by the solemn chords of the closing voluntary; while, on the other hand, by one deadly sweep of the same voluntary, it has been dashed away 'as the morning dew.'

In retaining this portion of the service, the Church acted upon her customary principle of not rejecting a positive good, in dread of an accidental evil.

[1] Faery Queene, IV. Canto v.
[2] State of Music on the Continent, Vol. II. p. 117.

She knew the beneficial influence that instrumental music possesses over the mind, and did not conceive herself called upon to foresee the future imbecilities of her organists, and their want of a spiritual interest in the duties of their office. Heavenly music, she well understood, will ever have a heavenly effect, however Satan may attempt to thwart and pervert it. And thus instead of cramping the art by any present restrictions, she deemed that she made sufficient provision against the existence and possible growth of evils, when she placed the controul in the hands of her clergy, and left them to the latest generation unshackled to devise such means, as might suit the changing tempers of changing times.

As to the possible advantages to be derived by the uneducated part of our congregations from the voluntary, the observations made in the preceding essay respecting the anthem, are equally applicable in this place. The passage quoted from Hooker is directly in point. It embraces in its defence, not merely the anthem, but every kind of instrumental music, which assumes a character and preserves its consistency, however obscure and scientific the cast of the composition. If, as in the case of the anthem, a subject be delivered to the people, as the basis upon which the solemn harmony is reared, it serves to give a particular direction to their devotion—if no subject be given, as in the case of the voluntary, their feelings are yet naturally buoyed upon the undulations of the music, and borne onwards towards that 'haven, where they would be.'

But what is admissible in its own nature, may be unseasonably introduced; the justice of which remark, as applied to the voluntary, is deserving of a moment's examination.

The times usually set apart for this species of com-

position, are three;—at the commencement of the service—before the first lesson—and after the final benediction.

I. It is customary for the organist to begin the opening voluntary, as soon as the Minister enters the church, and pursue his subject during the short time that elapses, before he appears in the desk. This introductory voluntary is supposed to have a character of its own—full, lively, and inspiriting, abounding in rich combinations rolled forth upon the great organ, and calculated to produce a sensation of 'joy and gladness of heart.' To those who object, that this feeling is not the best preparation for the penitent confessions of the service, and that sadness and solemnity better become the occasion, we would oppose the recommendation of the psalmist: 'O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.' By which joyous elevation of spirit David introduces confession of sin and prayer for mercy; for after the invitation to 'rejoice heartily in the strength of our salvation,' he immediately proceeds: 'O come, let us worship and fall down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.'[1] The character of the voluntary, therefore, is defensible on the highest authority; and if care be taken, that its liveliness degenerate not into wantonness, nor its energy into stage effect, it will be sure to commend itself to the general ear.[2]

It is further no mean virtue of the opening voluntary, that it serves to conceal the trifling disturbances,

[1] Psalm xcv.

[2] Some however conceive the character of the opening voluntary to be better sustained by a more grave and solemn style, abounding in full, close-wrought harmony, and inspiring a feeling of reverential awe.

which always attend the assembling together of a large congregation,—the opening and shutting of doors—the occasional chattering among the underlings of the church, giving or retailing orders—the trampling of pattens—sounds, which however indispensable, are neither musical nor edifying. It checks moreover the too frequent habit of conversation before the service, the salutations, and little gossipings of neighbours—affords thought to the vacant—and recals the wandering attention to the sanctity of the place, and the solemn character of the worship. For these minor advantages, the churches of our universities, where unhappily but slight respect is even professed by the junior members to the House and occasion, are especially under obligation to the voluntary. Nothing can be more disgraceful than the noise and clamour of the many voices exerted with the most thoughtless indecorum: but when the organ opens its loud and reverberating harmonies upon these rude and discordant sounds, they are soon hushed; the fatigue alone of talking against such a storm of music soon exhausts the strength, and the scene gradually changes from the restless movements of men engaged in lively conversation, to a posture indicative of silent attention, or serious thoughtfulness.

If the accuracy of the above remarks be admitted, the objections to the opening voluntary lie in a very narrow compass. The most plausible seems to be, that, however otherwise suitable, its introduction at this period may interfere with the private devotions, in which all are accustomed to engage, on entering the church. But enough has been said to evince, that it is the property of instrumental music to excite and regulate, rather than obstruct devotional feeling. And even if its beneficial effects were nugatory, surely

the distraction occasioned by the voluntary is in no degree comparable to that produced by the many dissonances above alluded to, the evils of which can only thus be counteracted. Undoubtedly under any circumstances, there is no lack of *materiel* to draw aside the thoughts from an act of devotion, if the heart be not engaged : and if it be, there is no assignable reason, why the sound of the organ, instead of dissipating or checking its fervour, should not mingle with its aspirations, and waft them onward to the Throne of Grace.

II. The Voluntary before the First Lesson seeks by a few soft and solemn chords to win the mind to meditation, and then to carry it forward by the regular, though intricate movements of a short fugue, flowing uninterruptedly with the tide of thought, and sustaining it unimpaired. 'It was probably when first permitted, designed to be a short, solemn, and affecting composition, proper to beget and cherish devout feelings and meditations, during an interval of the service.'[1]

The want, however, of proper devotion in our organists, and the evils which it necessarily entails, have caused an objection to be made to this voluntary with an appearance of greater reason, than to either of the others. At this period of the service, the whole congregation may be supposed to be assembled. They are therefore able to dedicate an undivided attention to the operations of the organist. If the performance is in strict keeping with the rest of the service, their affections may be excited, their minds solemnized, in a higher degree, than when subject, as in the former instance, to continual interruptions. But if, as is too often the case, the

[1] Christian Obs. Vol. IV. p. 213.

organist takes advantage of the opportunity, to display his skill or his vanity by light and secular movements, the very situation of his audience, condemned to sit in silent attention, renders his strains the less edifying, if not the more pernicious. The contrast between the gravity and solemnity of a congregation, and the absurd and wanton melodies which pour forth from the organ-loft, might, if the occasion were less sacred, and the scandal less flagrant, excite a smile,—if it were not painful, it would be ridiculous. A stranger, as he gazed on the anomalous scene, might imagine that the time was returned, when the people revenged themselves for the ecclesiastical slavery in which they were held the rest of the year, by making a mockery of the most sacred rites, and amusing themselves for a privileged day, with their Pope of fools, and Abbot of unreason.[1]

It is obvious that, without some little sense of obligation, the organist can hardly fail to trench upon the feelings of the devout. His eagerness to display himself and his instrument will necessarily blind his eye to consequences, the nature of which he cannot estimate. The violations of sound taste, of which he is guilty, are so varied as to defy a distinct enumeration. The constant changing of the stops, with combinations frequently abrupt and whimsical, as though the assembled congregation

[1] How applicable, with a slight variation, are Pope's lines to such musicians.

> 'No place so sacred from such fops is barred,
> Nor is Paul's church more safe than Paul's church-yard.
> Nay, fly to altars: there they'll 'play' you dead,
> For fools rush in where angels fear to tread.
> Distrustful sense with modest caution speaks,
> It still looks home, and short excursions makes,
> But rattling nonsense in full volley breaks;
> And never shocked, and never turned aside,
> Bursts out, resistless, with a thundering tide.'
>
> POPE'S ESSAY ON CRITICISM.

were a company of professors, met together to decide upon the powers of the instrument,—the fanciful use of the swell—the introduction of long, straggling cadenzas—profusion of ornament—Arpeggio and Piano-Forte passages, may be noticed among numerous faults of manner. Then as to the matter of the composition. If extemporaneous, it is frequently so light and frolicksome, that it resembles rather the overture to some miscellaneous concert, than the accents of devotion; moulded, it may be, upon some popular air, consisting of a few illustrative chords, passing through different keys, and connected together by runs, trillos, and other movements decidedly secular. If the organist has humility sufficient to prefer the compositions of others to his own, his choice often manifests the same unhappy lack of an ecclesiastical taste and spirit. Instead of confining himself to pure organ-pieces, he adopts some noisy chorus, as Handel's Hallelujah—or an air, the chief character of which depends upon the voice, as 'I know that my Redeemer liveth,' by the same master. Now it is not sufficient that a composition has merit, and is the product of an approved hand; it should also be suited to the instrument and occasion; and however admirable these pieces in their proper situations, in this part of the service, they are plainly intrusive. Nor is every purely instrumental composition calculated to form a good voluntary; and nothing is more inappropriate, than the light and jiggish movements of such pieces as Handel's Occasional Overture—not certainly the happiest of his works, and the most decidedly unecclesiastical of any composition that could be chosen. Still it must be admitted, that instrumental and vocal pieces may be found, not originally intended as voluntaries. And where the style is purely organical, such a composition

has this advantage over a mere voluntary, that the sweet and pleasing modulations with which it abounds might recal the words to remembrance. The musical world, however, is rich in the most magnificent organ fugues, which will always be acceptable in place of the maudlin original compositions which usurp that title.[1]

As one grand design of the introduction of music into the church, was to relieve natural weariness, and sustain the energies by a grateful variety, it is of importance, that the voluntary should be properly timed. It has been conceived, that the close of the Psalms is not the period of the service, when relief is especially needed. The labours of the clergyman are but commenced, his strength is as yet unabated, and the attention of the people unwearied. As no advantage therefore of this kind is perceived, it is frequently rejected. 'It would in most cases, probably, be an improvement to substitute a psalm in the room of what is called the organ voluntary; and an exceedingly proper interval for its introduction in the morning service would be, agreeably to the rubric, after the third collect, and previous to the reading that affecting part of the service—the Litany.'[2]

III. The style of the concluding voluntary which accompanies the retiring congregation is generally of a loud and stunning character. The organist seems to consider, that now is the time for the display of the full powers of his instrument. He is unsparing in the use of his pedals, he gives voice to every stop,

[1] Where the organist introduces at this period an extempore voluntary, it were well for him to attend to the excellent advice contained in a note to a sermon by the Rev. J. Eden, Vicar of St. Nicholas, Bristol.—'As one means of accomplishing this desirable object,' (spiritual profit) 'it might be suggested to the religious musician to read attentively, before he comes to the instrument, at least the first lesson of the day.'

[2] Christian Observer, Vol. IV. p. 213.

and puts every finger in requisition to fill up his chords. The thunder rolls through all parts of the church, and overpowers the many confused and jarring sounds of a congregation in motion. The full strength of the instrument, however, although well calculated to produce this effect, is conceived by many to have a deteriorating influence upon the minds of the people, and to weaken the impression produced by the energetic address of the preacher. Thus some clergymen, having perceived or imagined this ill consequence of a closing voluntary, have rejected it altogether, and leave the congregation to retire in the same silence as they entered. This blind mode of preferring destruction to reformation, is as much against true wisdom as sound taste.

'The dignity of musicke is great, if we do not partially and unequally burthen her with those faults whereof shee is guiltlesse: the artificer may offend, men's affections are corrupt, times unseasonable, places inconvenient, the art itself notwithstanding in her own proper and lawful use innocent and harmlesse.'[1]

If every species of music must have a deadening influence upon religious impressions, then no sacrifice of musical enjoyment can be too great—but this who is so fearless as to assert? A better judgment has influenced others, who, equally jealous for the spiritual welfare of their flocks, and equally fearful of the evil of so boisterous a performance, have yet deemed, that without sacrificing the one, they might correct the other, by admitting a voluntary of a soft and melancholy character, breathing a spirit of contemplation, and well harmonizing with that 'peace which passeth all understanding' which has just been pronounced

[1] Praise of Musicke, p. 36.

over them as their portion by the delegated servant of God. The good effects of this alteration have been both felt and acknowledged. The even temper of the spirit has remained unruffled, and the solemn chords of the organ have not only deepened the previous impression, but coloured it with that bright joy and gladness, which form an antepast of celestial blessedness. The sentiment burns in the Christian bosom: 'Lord, I have loved the habitation of thine house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth.' [1]

The prominent station of the organist—the opportunity afforded him of occupying solely the attention of the people—and the confidence thus reposed in him, demand manifestly, that he should be a man of piety and good works. For a given space of time, he is permitted to address the audience by a mode of communication, not perhaps so distinct and intellectual as the organ of speech, but sufficiently intelligible to exhibit the workings of his mind. If he be under the influence of the Holy Spirit, the tones elicited from his instrument will have a character and unction readily perceived and responded

[1] Bedford may furnish an answer to such as object to the character of the voluntary just described, as too sombre. 'There is as great a difference in musick, between that which is serious and that which is dull, and also between that which is sober and that which is heavy, as there is in any thing else. An artist needs not to show himself melancholy, and he hath as little reason to show himself mad. It is very strange in some places after sermon to hear the organ play, when the congregation is dismissed, as if they played them out of a tavern or a playhouse. This can only be looked upon as the tares which choke the good seed, and render it unfruitful. Now our Saviour tells us, that the enemy which sowed them is the Devil; and certainly it is no honour for any man to be employed in his business.' Abuse of Musick, p. 238.

There seems, however, no reason why the closing voluntary should not take its character from that of the season or the subject discussed in the sermon. A lively finale would often be most appropriate upon occasions of spiritual rejoicing, e. g. at Easter or Christmas, after a discourse on the duty and privilege of thanksgiving, the happiness of the believer, or the glories of heaven.

to by the affections of the hearer;—if vanity be the pervading principle of his actions, the strains of his voluntary will readily convey it in all its emptiness to the popular understanding. Hence the absolute necessity, if the voluntary is to compass the end for which it is designed, that the organist should possess, not merely 'those virtues morolle and specikatyve' which even in the reign of Edw. IV. were required of 'Chapelenes and gentlemen Clerkes of the Chapelle,'"[1] but love to the Redeemer as an essential principle, and a habit of conforming his actions in all things to the word of God, and the dictates of a sanctified conscience. It is not indeed in man to discern in all cases the reality of a Christian profession, and thus mistakes in judgment may occasionally occur; but so long as we follow the sure waymarks given us in Scripture, we need not fear the stability of our reasoning upon the character and conduct of any individual. A man who is a systematic drunkard, adulterer, sabbath-breaker, swearer, cannot be a child of God, and may not attempt to become His servant. There is no illiberality in echoing this Scripture assertion, and no cruelty in acting upon it. Such an one is utterly unfit for the sacred duties of an organist. He again, who, during the week, devotes his time to theatres, operas, and secular concerts, and his talents to further temptations, which, if he has any sense of religion, he must know, pander to the destruction of souls, cannot be supposed to live under the influence of Christian principle. He also is no candidate for a holy office. But we may go further. No one but he who makes a profession of vital godliness, frequents the assemblies of the saints, is found ever in devout attendance upon the

[1] Liber Niger quoted by Burney, History of Musick, Vol. III. p. 4.

blessed sacrament, is consistent in a high Christian walk and conversation, bears the mark of the Saviour upon his forehead in all times and companies —no one but such a man ought to presume to offer himself for this sacred employment. Even such a character may be successfully counterfeited; but certain it is, that were each candidate subjected to a rigid examination, upon the strait and yet broad principles laid down in the word of God for a Christian life, not only would fewer libertines, but fewer hypocrites ascend the stairs leading to the organ-pew.[1]

That this high character can seldom be claimed in all its parts by our organists, may be seen from the simple fact, that they are generally more or less connected with places of public and secular amusement. Now when we consider the company that frequent such scenes,—the feelings necessarily excited,—the general habits of the musicians themselves,—the

[1] These remarks apply equally to the singing men at cathedrals, who are generally laymen, and 'whose business,' as Bedford observes, 'being to assist the devotions of others, must be an uneasy employment to such as have none of their own. Such people if irregular are much fitter for the exercises of penance than praise. Their white garments which they wear, are but false resemblances to the innocency of their lives, and can never hide the foulness of their hearts. The same may be said to such, as was formerly said to Elpidophorus, when he fell from Christianity. 'These are the garments which shall accuse thee, when thou shalt appear before the Majesty of the Great Judge—these are they that shall bitterly pursue thee at the last day; because thou hast not walked agreeably thereunto, but hast cast off the sacred obligations of thy baptism, and the true faith which thou didst then profess and take upon thee.'' Bedford's Abuse of Music, p. 250.

Those, however, who ascribe the irregularities of the church musicians to the Church herself, must recollect that she authorises no vice in any of her members; and that, since even in the purest age, there was a Judas among the twelve apostles, a Nicholas among the seven deacons, and a Demas among the seventy disciples, it can be no wonder, if persons are found in the present day, among the professed servants of the Lord's house, who disgrace the Christian name. Such reasoners, instead of reviling the Church for evils over which she mourns, had better act up to the injunctions she has imposed, and by giving information to the regular authorities, remove the scandal from their own responsibility.

character of the music—and the feastings that succeed—we may readily conceive how inapt a preparation such employments form for a sacred service. The organist, reeling into the church for his Sabbath duties—his spirits already frenzied with the fever of his six days' revel,—evinces by the first touch of his finger upon the obedient instrument, the profane habitude of his mind. His style of performance is injured by his associations, for sacred music spurns the contamination of secular; and we have the authority of one, who it is to be feared felt not the spiritual value of sacred music, that 'to aim at equal perfection in both is to try to serve God and mammon.'[1]

There are those again, not officially connected with places of musical dissipation, whose employments during the week are equally unbecoming a sacred profession. The majority of our organists are teachers of youth, not in the sacred character and application of the art—in which case their exertions were in the highest degree laudable,—but in exactly that practical abuse of it, with which men amuse themselves on their way to eternal ruin. They instruct in that very style, and upon those very samples, which serve to foster a love for the follies of an evil world, and thus, while wearing the badge of a Christian service, pander to the hateful purposes of the great enemy of souls.

Some excuse however, reasoning upon mere worldly principles, may be made for them. According to the present state of musical patronage, they might justly remonstrate against any contraction of the

[1] Burney. 'Those excellent composers for the church whose works have survived them, such as Palestrina, Tallis, Birde, Allegri, Benevoli, Colonna, Caldara, Marcello Lotti, Perti, and Fux, have chiefly confined themselves to the church style.' Continental Tour, Vol. I. p. 333.

sphere of their exertions. They might well reason, that if a servile compliance with the fashions of the day, and the encouragement of an operatic taste be inconsistent with the sacred profession of a servant of God, a provision ought to be secured to them, sufficiently ample for their support without resorting to such measures? It must be admitted, that it is only just possible for an organist, with every aid derived from the church, the concert, the theatre, and private instruction, to sustain with decency the common expenses of a family. Cut him off from any one of these sources, and he droops with poverty. Bid him confine himself to ecclesiastical music, and the command is a bitter mockery, so long as the paltry salary of ten, twenty, or thirty pounds is customarily handed to him year by year. There is perhaps hardly a more senseless clamour raised in this clamorous age, than about the wealth of the church, if by the term is meant the sums annually paid to her servants for their respective labours. Compare her boasted riches, with but few exceptions, with the incomes of any existing professions. The great body of her clergy struggling with poverty, and obliged frequently to combine tuition with parochial labour, to enable them in any degree to obtain sustenance—her inferior servants absolutely unable to subsist upon the pittance derived from their ecclesiastical labours. How then can an organist devote himself exclusively to his official duties? Such is the present degraded state of Church music, that were he to regulate his tuition by the principles of his profession, ruin must be the consequence. Where would pupils be found? Who troubles himself about music as a sacred art given for a sacred application? If he instructs, he must conform to worldly fashions—he must teach the most favourite new song

—ape the grimaces of the latest male or female singer who has caught the fickle breath of popular applause, — pander to the vainest coquetry for a worldly object—feed by flattery the natural pride of a youthful breast—initiate his fair pupil into all the arcana of theatrical amusement ;—or if he refuse, and seek for scholars whom he may educate in sound music and sound religion, he seeks in vain.

Considering therefore the difficulties that surround the conscientious organist, who respects the sacred character of his office, it is as noble, as it is rare, to see a man of talent spurning the taste of the day and the trammels of poverty, and devoting the whole bent of his powers to promote the cause of a sanctified ecclesiastical harmony. It is impossible to speak in too high terms of such Christian self-denial [1] —but it is vain to spend our admiration in mere words. The duty of seconding his exertions rests with us ; and if the denizens of a large city would act, I will not say generously, but justly, by such an individual—pay him a hundred pounds, instead of a starving thirty, place the whole choir under his tuition, and cease to fetter him with uninformed and idle restrictions, some hope might be entertained of improvement in our choral services. Till then, while men thus drain the blood of their neighbour without giving him food to replenish it, let them cease to clamour about the wealth of the Church. While we continue our present mode of robbing God of the dues required for the support of his servants, we can neither complain of the system of jobbing carried on from church to church, supplied alternately by substitutes, nor wonder that the worldly character

[1] Brave conquerors! for so you are,
That war against your own affections,
And the huge army of the world's desires.

of our organists detracts from their respectability, and leads them to associate with men, in whose company no gentleman, much less professed servant of God, should be seen.

It is of especial importance to press this subject upon public attention at the present time, when the crowded state of all our professions tends to encourage emulation, and arouse the most vigorous competition for even subordinate situations. Music like every other source of professional employment has, upon each fresh opportunity for 'place and pension,' poured forth skilful candidates proportioned to the general progress of knowledge, and the increase of our population. Thus situations of comparative importance and emolument have been eagerly contested, and scope afforded for merit to enter the lists, and claim its appropriate reward. If the complaint be just, that the result has not in every instance favoured the most worthy, and that such trials of skill have in the end proved but a flimsy veil to cover an act of predetermined preference, Music cannot expect better treatment than other kindred arts, where in a nominally open competition, merit is too often justled out of the course, by interest, presumption, or ignorance.

It is plain however that such opportunities must necessarily, by stimulating exertion, raise the standard of musical excellence, and shame into their deserved insignificance those burdens upon the church services, who by their carelessness or natural imbecility contrive to give to the finest toned organs, all the imperfections of a mechanical grinding-box. We have indeed too many examples that mere skill and execution, however serviceable as auxiliaries, do not necessarily convey just notions of ecclesiastical music, or a becoming reverence for a sacred profession. Still

since the times favour a discriminating choice, surely no means should be left unemployed to obtain organists of sound and creditable skill, as well as devoted piety. Greater exertions are demanded upon our part to sustain this spirit of enterprise, and ensure for the Church the noblest specimens of genius engrafted upon the Christian character.

In regard to the choice of an organist, it is evident that every thing must depend upon the capabilities of those that appoint. Yet even where skill is not wanting, passion and prejudice are too apt to combine together to warp a correct judgment. A critical and accurate knowledge of music is so rare even among well-educated men, that the judges are frequently both physically and mentally unable to come to a just decision. Hence they are obliged, in many cases, either to admit interposing prejudices or refer the case to the discretion of some musical acquaintance. The first method is not uncommon, and skill magnanimously rejected as of small moment. To save appearances, an invitation is given for a trial of strength, and after due examination, the generous arbitrators adjudge the contested post to a blind man for his blindness, a woman for her sex, or some old broken pensioner of his parish in lieu of his pension. No one would desire to stay the current of cheering charity; but if the object recommended be an object of charity, let him be treated as such, and obtain a charitable donation, without exacting from him 'day labour, light denied.' It may be charity to the individual to allow him an annual income of £20. but it is surely no charity to the congregation to subject them in consequence to ineffective Sabbath services. If the situation of organist possess any value, it cannot be too efficiently supplied; and

although the first question undoubtedly respects his moral qualities, the next in importance touches his natural and acquired merits. If he be found deficient in either, he should by no means, on account of some physical infirmity, be accepted over the head of his neighbour, who happens to combine to suitable qualifications, sound limbs and a hale and healthy constitution. [1]

Beside these charitable prejudices, there are others of a less noble and generous kind. A vestry-man may have some second cousin who has studied music, but with so little success, that he can never hope to rise in his profession without some helping hand. This his wise and affectionate relative kindly holds forth to him. They advance upon the canvass. Much is said of neighbourly feeling, little of musical knowledge, and less of moral obligation. The tyro is accepted, and the congregation doomed to endure his performances during the term of his natural life.

The second method alluded to of referring to a musical friend has only this inconvenience, that he may be governed by some petty pique or partiality. At Oxford, the decision upon which the degree depends rests actually with one individual, the Professor of Music for the time being; for although the Vice-Chancellor, Proctors, and Heads of Houses

[1] 'When the organist at the High Church in Hull died and left a widow in strait circumstances, her friends solicited that she might have the place, though she knew nothing of music, and be allowed to find a deputy. Milner who thought it wrong to bestow upon people, under a notion of charity, places for which they were utterly unqualified, said to those who came to solicit his interest: 'As places are to be disposed of on this principle, I hope if I should die before my mother, you will appoint her to succeed me in the lectureship and school.' This speech set the matter in so ridiculous and yet so just a light, that the design was dropped, and the widow relieved by a subscription.' Rev. W. Richardson's Life, p. 32 note.

convene together, and apparently apply their critical acumen to a proposed composition, performed in their presence with sound of fife and harp and flourish of trumpet, yet the piece has passed the ordeal long before this process, which is merely to enable dignity to cover the deficiencies of an infirm judgment.

A practice has obtained in some places deserving of general adoption, provided it be followed up with a strict inquiry into the character and morals of the individual appointed. The candidates have an opportunity afforded them to exhibit severally in order, before certain musical men of acknowledged taste and skill. To prevent any clue to the persons of the candidates, they are concealed, and their performances, which they respectively execute, designated by numbers. Impartiality being thus, as far as possible ensured, the judges form their opinion upon the execution of the psalm-tunes and voluntaries played, and, having compared notes, point to the approved number. 'If this method' says Burney, 'were always practised upon such occasions, there would not be so many bad organists, or such a number of good performers unemployed; but, in general, it is in vain to play for a place, be a candidate's talents ever so great, as the matter is often determined before it come to a hearing, and almost always by incompetent judges.'[1]

This plan however when successful can only ensure a correct and impartial decision respecting merit. The individual chosen may be a worse than unsuitable character, by his want of religious feeling, his worldliness, or even open immorality. But in general no inquiry is made respecting his religious

[1] Burney's Continental Tour. Vol. II. p. 293.

endowments—he is suffered, without a remark, to lead the meditations and thanksgivings of a congregation assembled for worship, and the next day to pamper the worst passions, in the exercise of that very art, he has hallowed by so solemn a dedication.

'We need not doubt,' says St. Chrysostom, 'whether God be highly displeased with us, or what the cause of his anger is, if things of so great fear and holiness as are the least and lowest duties of his service be thrown wilfully on them, whose not only mean, but bad and scandalous quality, doth defile whatsoever they handle.' [1]

> 'But who shall go about
> To cozen fortune, and be honorable
> Without the stamp of merit! Let none presume
> To wear an undeserved dignity.
> O that estates, degrees, and offices
> Were not divided corruptly! and that clear honour
> Were purchased by the merit of the wearer.
> How many then should cover, that stand bare!
> How many be commanded, that command!
> How much low peasantry would then be glean'd
> From the true seed of honor! and how much honor
> Picked from the chaff and ruin of the times,
> To be new varnished!'

When will the time come that God shall be honored, at least not so systematically dishonored, in this particular portion of his service? Life is rapidly passing away. The object sought is the glorification of our God, and the edification of our souls. A few more years, and our power to effect a reformation is paralyzed. Be it our's then to delay no longer a correction of the existing abuses—to break boldly from the iron curb of custom—and forbid the tongue of the

[1] Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, Bk. V. Sect. 81.

reviler to apply to any part of the Christian worship the scornful 'Cui bono,' by enabling it to carry its own intelligence to the most hardened heart and untutored understanding.

> Let's take the instant by the forward top;
> For we are old, and on our quick'st decrees
> The inaudible and noiseless foot of time
> Steals, ere we can effect them.

X.

THE PRACTICE OF CHURCH MUSIC.

Blame not my lute I you desire,
But blame the cause that we thus play;
For burning heat, blame not the fire,
But him that bloweth the coal alway;
Blame ye the cause, blame ye not us,
That we men's faults have touched thus;
Blame not my lute.

JOHN HALL.

THE time and labour, which a wise man will expend upon the acquisition of an art, must necessarily be proportioned to his opinion of its value. If he deem it an object of mere selfish pleasure, likely to interfere with his more important avocations, he may probably write it out of the list of his pursuits. If he consider it in the light of an elegant accomplishment, the solace of solitude and the charm of society, alike friendly to the health and to the spirits, he can hardly be blamed, if he devote some moments of relaxation to its exercise. If he take a wider range, and survey it in all its bearings, not merely as a pleasing acquirement, or a cordial amid bodily infirmity, but as a responsible and sacred talent, can he do otherwise than yield to the constraining obligation, 'to stir up the gift that is in him?'

Whoever acknowledges the high rank, which Music demands, and deserves to hold in the Christian Church, will consider the question of its cultivation as of some moment. If a service be acceptable, it becomes us to use every exertion to render it worthy of acceptance. If the sacrifice send up a grateful incense to the throne of God, it should be, as much as possible, 'without spot or blemish.'

It was presumed in the preceding essays, that for all the purposes of Parochial Psalmody very few can plead a total incapacity—and that the great error consists, not so much in the want of musical perception, as in the steady determination to refuse to the measure of it vouchsafed, the improvements of which it is susceptible, by care, study, and exercise. Many talents remain actually unknown to their possessor, till circumstances unfold their latent energies. Hence the necessity imposed upon all persons, to subject their powers to some examination, before they pronounce upon their total and irremediable inefficiency,—upon the unmusical man, to ascertain the exact extent of his inability, and upon the man of genius, to prepare him 'to praise God with the best member that he has.' Some labour is necessary to enable, as well the one to cast into the treasury of his penury, as the other to pour in of his abundance. No talent, however vigorous, springs spontaneously to perfection. Many are the gradations, especially in subjects of taste, between the first rude efforts of genius and its entire developement. The more luxurious an acquisition is, the more exertion is necessary to obtain it. It demands as well diligence to bring to maturity, as a natural spirit and puissance to apprehend. And when we consider how luxuries are apt to multiply in the very acquisition, we see mercy in the appointment, that the path to them

should be intricate and obstructed. The more beautiful and fragrant the rose, the ruder the thorn that guards it. To attain comparative perfection in an art like music, it is necessary to combine with a high natural taste and talent, great patience and continued application. The labour must be proportioned to the exquisite character of the prize. Many a rude rock must be levelled, many a crust of frozen ground broken up, many a long year of discouragement slowly surmounted, before the eye brightens upon the rich and precious vein which awaits the persevering.

God however is pleased to accept of many services which fall far short of perfection. Enough has been already said to shew, that a very slender degree of knowledge and skill may suffice to worship him acceptably, who rejects not the intuitive attempts of 'babes and sucklings.' When the spirit is engaged, the meanest musical tribute ranks with the richest and most scientific. The Church moreover facilitates the labour of preparation, by presenting for general use the simplest modulations in the simplest style. To accompany with propriety, truth, and correctness the sober Psalm-tune or the livelier Chant, the only two species of composition proposed to the people, demands but little previous time and exertion. But it demands some, and urges its demand by appealing to three powerful motives—reverence towards Him, who rebukes a careless offering—regard for our brother, upon whom we have no right to intrude our infirmities —and a becoming self-respect, which shrinks from exciting the smile of contempt or the blush of kindness.

But however weighty these motives appear in theory, they fail in practice, to produce the desired end. Not only is the duty itself generally neglected, but the need of preparation seldom enters the

minds, even of those who engage in it, though accustomed in other concerns, to talk much and loudly of the extent of human obligation, and the jealousy of the Divine honor. It may be useful then to inquire more minutely into the causes of this neglect, —why it is, that so many are satisfied to be urged continually to unite in a sacred service, for which they imagine themselves disqualified, and yet never expend a thought or an effort, to obtain the requisite qualification.

I. The love of the world, surmounting the fear of God, too readily accounts for the general contempt heaped upon every branch of Church-music, especially Psalmody. A high devotional reverence would enhance the value even of the rudest strains far above the richest secular modulations. But unhappily the Giver is forgotten in the gift. Sin directs the natural talent into a channel, which carries off the flow of feeling from the only source of real happiness. The taste for music partakes of that perversion incident to a fallen state. As an appetite, it must be fed: but though presented with manna from above, it loathes even angel's food as too light, and seeks for some nourishment, which may accord better with the gross and sensual character of its desires. Now in proportion to the strength of a passion, is the peril of temptation. The more blessed the principle, if directed to good, the more ruinous, if pursued unto evil. Well knowing the influence of music over mankind, Satan uses every endeavour to extend and rivet that influence. His dominion spreads far and wide—men are found eager to pander to his unholy purposes, by the free and unlimited tender of their powers—and some, sworn to a nobler service, unwillingly and perhaps unwittingly aid its advancement, by their negligence in thwarting his

plans, and opposing his efforts. Hence he seems to have an almost universal control over this unhappy art. Wherever we turn, we find such crowded examples of its perversion to the worst of ends, that in most cases the love of music is considered almost synonimous with the love of the world. An individual, who has a character for knowledge and taste in the art, is questioned as a matter of course respecting the present state of the opera—the success of the last evening concert,—the skill of some fashionable performer,—or the merits of some favorite love-song. If he profess ignorance of the present state of secular music—that he has neither permitted his imagination to associate with the devils of the Der Freyschütz, nor mingled his raptures with the sentimental songs of the Italian Opera, he is honored with a smile of pity, that one so musical should have neglected the very fountain of musical enjoyment. If in self-defence he assert, that he avoids such entertainments as injurious to religion and morals, and not suited to sustain a pure and healthy taste—that he has confined his practice almost entirely to ecclesiastical or instrumental music,—the smile of pity changes into a stare of amazement, at conduct so novel, and reasons so little appreciated. In fact, the majority of the patrons of the art, consider it purely as the toy of idleness, and the helpmeet of dissipation, and have little idea of musical enjoyment, unconnected with scenes of musical revelry.

This prevalent taste unhappily directs in a great measure musical education, and the latter again purveys for the indulgences of the former. They act reciprocally for their mutual encouragement. In the present state of society, an acquaintance with music is considered indispensable, as a female accomplishment. The parent, who desires his daughter to

captivate in polished circles, is sedulous to bestow upon her a liberal education in music. If he possess not a sense of religious obligation, her spiritual interests are necessarily no obstacle to the general arrangement of his plans. Fixing his eye steadily upon her temporal advantages, he is guided in his selection of a master, by the voice of fashion; and thus possibly lights upon some one of the many hungry Italians, who

> Have sold their fortunes at their native homes,
> Bearing their birthrights proudly on their backs
> To make a hazard of new fortunes here,

and who deem, that they fulfil the claims alike of duty and of interest, by laying a foundation for frivolity of taste, in an acquaintance with the most frothy sonatas and songs of the day. Thus Miss passes a course of preparation for the gaieties of the theatre and the concert room; and ere she commences her round of intoxicating pleasure, the splendour of the approaching scenes dances before her eye, the names of the butterflies of the day are already glib upon the tongue, her ear rings with the trumpet-call of expectation, her memory is thronged with every note of the most fashionable songs, her musical ideas naturally follow as they are trained,—and when the happy day for her debut arrives, she tastes only in reality what has long absorbed her imagination, and, with perverted taste and sleeping conscience, launches forth upon her voyage of anticipated delight. With these incitements for gratified vanity and impure fancy, what can the Church present to attract attention? The drone of the psalm-tune is intolerable—the chant monotonous—the anthem insipid—the voluntary wearisome. There is nothing of natural inclination,

precept, or example to inspire a wish like David's after the music of the sanctuary: 'O let my mouth be filled with Thy praise; that I may sing of Thy glory and honour all the day long.'[1] What wonder if the baleful influence of fancies concocted in a heated imagination and fired by external excitement, renders the soul unfit for the unruffled calm and tempered joy of Christian feeling! How can it be expected, that there should enter into the giddy mind, in its ceaseless whirl of intoxicating delight—the duty of the creature to the Creator, the real vanity of all earthly enjoyment, the responsibility that rests upon the abuse of a talent, the awful account which is awaiting the quick and dead, the claims of the worship of God over the service of Satan and of Self! A taste for the world's pursuits can never accord with a love for the things of God. We are told on the best authority, 'that if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.'[2] Dreadful then is the responsibility of a parent, who, for the sake of some fancied temporal advantage, lends a hand, not to control, but urge onward the tide of youthful feeling, in a course by which God is dishonored, and the soul exposed to the most imminent peril. The tenderness and helplessness of the infant affections call loudly for the most conscientious exercise of parental authority; and who, in glancing over a world, which everywhere presents examples of the miserable bondage in which children too often are —the bondage of weakness under lawful but infatuated and pernicious authority—can avoid lamenting the lot of many a simple and affectionate spirit, early led by the hand of its unworthy guardian into ruinous scenes of ungodliness and dissipation? Thus

[1] Psalm lxxi. 7. [2] 1 John ii. 15.

> 'The canker galls the infants of the spring
> Too oft before their buttons be disclosed;
> And in the morn and liquid dew of youth,
> Contagious blastments prove most imminent.'

It comes not within the province of this work to discuss at large the real character of decidedly worldly amusements. The evils which attend the fascinations of the theatre, opera, ball, and concert-room, have been so often urged, that few, who profess religious principle, are found hardy enough to recommend them as a becoming recreation for the young. Even those who excuse their own attendance, by an appeal to their age and experience, as a sufficient antidote against feverish excitement, allow their injurious effects upon youth. For a parent to advocate their cause, in the face of the most alarming examples of infidelity and dissipation, traced to theatrical indulgences, argues either an ignorance of the most natural connection between cause and effect, or a determination to attain some fantastic object of worldly ambition, even at the sacrifice of a child's happiness in this world and the next.

Irreligious parents however may at any rate claim the merit of consistency. They themselves know not the value of the Redeemer's love, how then can they direct their children to the cross, and tell them of the sacrifice made to redeem them from the pleasures of the world! Conceiving that the happiness of their offspring in eternity, is the cheap purchase of a few formal acts of devotion and charity—they concentrate every effort to ensure their aggrandisement in time. The occupations proposed to the juvenile attention, as the serious employments of life, are card playing, dressing, music, idle visits, and frequenting places of public resort. And if the incessant labour of indolent pleasure be crowned by an honorable and wealthy

connection, the parent smiles over the success of his projects, and flatters himself, that in his treatment of his family, he has fulfilled his obligations alike before God and before man.

Not thus however either can or dare the religious man reason ; and yet it were well, if the conduct of many parents who have regard to the spiritual character of their children, did not too nearly correspond with that of professed men of the world. The influence of music for good and evil is without question not sufficiently appreciated in the plan of education. Even where the general mode of instruction proves the sincerity of the parent, one entrance is frequently left open for the admission of incipient worldliness, and through the natural love of music, pour in the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. The fond heart of the father throbs with delight over the expanding beauties of his daughter, and he desires to afford her every advantage of liberal tuition. He shuns not general accomplishments, because he considers them consistent with the surrender of the heart unto God. But lest they should prove a snare, he forbids an attendance on theatrical and operatic amusements ; and, confining the display of endowments to select society, deems he has raised a sufficient barrier against evil consequences. He fixes his choice upon a music-master not positively dissipated ; but, ignorant himself of music, and accustomed to regard it merely as an accomplishment, which may forward a proper settlement for his daughter, he attempts not to regulate the course of practice according to the tenor of his principles, but reposes entire confidence in the master, from the idea, that each man is best acquainted with the nature of his own craft. It may be, that the instructor is connected with some of the public sources of musical gratification. It is natural

therefore for him to recommend such songs and pieces as are most in popular esteem; and thus, even if he refrain from allusions to scenes of fashionable dissipation, the light, wanton, and frivolous taste so markedly opposed to the simplicity of ecclesiastical music, mingles with the first efforts of native talent, and moulds itself upon the earliest associations. A new direction is given to the workings of the unsophisticated mind. There is no longer the same interest in the solemn harmonies of the church. Lost to all love of sacred strains, the young musician now lingers with delight upon the flowing melody of the sentimental love-song, or the chivalrous clang of the stately march; and she peeps with eagerness through the bars of her cage, fluttering to quaff largely of the pleasures of that world, whose very sippings are so sweet. Alas for the parent! He little thought when he permitted music to form a part of his child's education, that it would entice the heart away from divine things; and yet he adopted not those measures, which could alone make it minister to a spiritual end. Some time may elapse, before he discerns the cause of that increasing love of the world, which manifests itself in the conduct of his daughter. Meanwhile the poison operates—the corruption of taste is advancing—the house is deluged with the most favorite songs of the most favorite singers, and the most approved specimens of florid execution. The style of her singing has changed from the unaffected flow of natural sweetness, to the sickening affectation of theatrical novelties. Permitted to sing what she is not permitted to hear, she feels her restraint from public amusements daily more irksome; and while she attracts the applause of the social circle by the sweetness of her voice and the brilliancy of her execution,

she sighs over the harsh commands imposed upon her, the reasons for which she is no longer able to appreciate or comprehend.

The little attention paid to the real character of music, even by pious parents, is evinced by the poetry of the songs not unfrequently found on the pianofortes, or in the canterburies of a religious family. The songs of the day may be divided into three classes,—profane, sensual, sentimental. None would be hardy enough to defend the two former from the charge of being directly sinful. The last, if not positively so, is certainly injurious to the growth of Christian attainment. A far higher rank however it deservedly holds on the score of morality; and it is a marked improvement of the time, that we no longer meet with those dreadful specimens of unabashed sin, which at no very distant period disgraced the musical world. The present age, indeed, would not endure the undisguised iniquity which blazed through the folio pages of song writing in the last century, when the most glaring blasphemy and obscenity were published, collected, and dispersed through the country in massy tomes by music-sellers, syrened forth by opera-singers and actresses, and without a blush re-echoed by the youthful aspirant after the accomplishments of the day. Oaths the most daring were thus taken upon the youthful lip as familiarly as household terms—allusions the grossest were borne along on the soft and flowing melody of a female voice—and the mythological host of former ages, patronizing the vices of which they were severally the perpetrators and panderers, were summoned back from their elysium of impurity to revel in an assembly bearing the Christian name.

The instances adduced by Mr. Bedford in his honest volume on the 'Abuse of Music,' of the im-

modesty and profaneness of the songs of his time, are indeed appalling. It is impossible to peruse a few of the pages, which he thought necessary to devote to authenticate his assertions, and not sicken at the unmitigated ribaldry, which is every where presented. However justly we may lament the evils of our operatic music, we have certainly cause to congratulate ourselves, that such God-defying profligacy is no longer systematically recommended for youthful adoption. The indecencies and blasphemies that were then imbibed in the theatres, repeated at home by the young lady of fashionable education, echoed by the singers in the streets, and carried down to the city-tavern and village alehouse, Bedford declares, 'no pen is able to describe. These insolencies have for a long time cried for vengeance. They defy the God of heaven, dare him to do his worst, and provoke him to send the fiercest of his wrath upon a distracted nation. The Manichæans, who ascribed part of the creation to the devil, did never exclaim in such a manner as this. What Jew can endure the diversion of Christians?'[1]

Taste, however, if no higher principle, has effected a reformation. Public feelings and morals have acquired a tone of delicacy, and with it the style of musical enjoyment has in some degree accorded. Refinement of taste brings along with it refinement of manners. There may indeed be as much grovelling submission to popular taste, since the taste has changed; but it wears not the appearance. The school of sentimentality has happily succeeded the school of debauch. The brutal language which clothes the sensual dreamings of debauchees are, in strict keeping, left to the lowest receptacles of vice. The vows of love,

[1] Bedford's Abuse of Music, pp. 98, 99.

the fond moanings of farewell, the delights of romantic solitude, the pleasures of the feast, the gaiety, splendour, and perils of war, interspersed with the necessary concomitants of kisses and caresses, tears and faintings, heart-breakings and heart-burnings, wooings and weepings, form the general features of the modern song. The divinity of the lyrics,—for even such pieces have their divinity—if it be not more orthodox, is at any rate less profane than that of the former school. Instead of the most wanton perversion of Scripture passages, the unsparing use of the boldest oaths, the open countenance given to drunkenness, adultery, and general profligacy, by sneering ridicule and ungodly satire, 'making a mock at sin,' and calling up the heathen deities to sanction this heathen conduct—the young vocalist is now presented with a general disuse of all scripture, either for a good or an evil purpose, and incidental allusions to another and a happier state. Profanity no longer comes forward with a ruffian-like front, but either skulks under some ambiguous exclamation, or presents itself with so gentlemanly a bearing, as hardly to excite displeasure. In general, Christian as well as heathen names are cast aside—some of the inferior gods have been entirely discarded,—the manes of many a heathen villain have ceased to be invoked—lyrics are no longer dedicated to false deities, and with the exception of a few naked cupids hovering over a title page, and an occasional appeal to Bacchus and Venus, the religion of these pieces consists in a belief in the existence of a sort of Turkish paradise, freely open to those who have fallen on the field of battle, or by the slower process of a heart-breaking love.

An advocate for the present system of song-writing might therefore be inclined to crow and clap his wings over its comparative harmlessness. And

not without reason. The idle reveries of the imagination are ever better than the infectious breathings of open impurity; and the parent, who seeks for no higher object than the entertainment of his daughter, may possibly flatter himself, that secular song is now sufficiently purified. Yet even in this he may be mistaken. No one will presume to assert, that vice is eradicated from our musical lyrics, although it assume a less bold and glaring exterior. Profanity may lurk under indifference, and sensuality under an assumed Platonism; and that it does so in this particular every eye, awake to the general interests of society, will readily discern. Whether undisguised or latent iniquity be the more perilous, is a question that has often been mooted. The very disgust, excited by the former, has been considered a safeguard against its baneful influence; while the insidious character of the latter, whereby it induces confidence, and furnishes arguments for indulgence, is supposed to render it the more dangerous, lest the poison, not so readily perceived, should be unconsciously imbibed, and thus surreptitiously the evil principle do its evil office in the youthful mind. It is however a problem to be decided only in the great day of account, whether the coarse rhapsodies of the last century, or the luscious impurities and wanton prettinesses of the pupils of what has been aptly called '*the Satanic school*,' have gained more trophies for the wide-spread dominion of the Princes of this world.

But however carelessly a man of the world may reason upon this subject, a pious parent, as he is higher in his hopes, so is more jealous in his tests. The common excuses of those who humour this evil taste will not satisfy him. That men must live, is no argument that they must live in sin—that nothing

else will sell, cannot induce him to buy what is evil in its tendency—that the words need not be minded but the music, he feels to be an insult to his understanding—that it was always so, and therefore cannot be helped, he knows as false in its assertion, as empty in its inference—that it is vain to insist upon niceties, he rejects as totally irrelevant—and that such expressions are borrowed from heathen authors, he is conscious can avail only with those, who are willing to sacrifice principle to polish. In short, he seeks to judge of the character of the tree by its fruits, and feels convinced that the effects stated to result from the songs of the last century, are not wholly inapplicable to the lyrics of this,—'that they occasion the ruin of many thousands of souls, and plunge them in everlasting misery—that they draw down God's judgments upon the nation for such abominable impieties—that they are the means of debauching and ruining many families—that they promote the interests of the play-house—and that they wear off a sense of religion, drawing away the affections from music really divine.'[1] Who then, if a particle of these consequences follow, would not shun them as the venom of an adder's tooth! In fact, music cannot have a negative influence upon the youthful mind. If it work well, it will work with God, and promote spirituality—if it work ill, it will work against God, and provoke sin. Knowing this, the religious parent trusts when he encourages instrumental music, that God will bless the improvement of a gift imparted for improvement—but if it engender light and frivolous ideas, invite improper associations, or engross so much time as from a recreation to become the sole object of pursuit,

[1] Abuse of Musick.

he has reason to fear, lest it minister to sin. When he introduces vocal music, he is satisfied as to its admissibility, if the words involve no violation of sound principle, even though the sentiment be not directly religious; but when he perceives, that the language taken upon the lip serves to strengthen the natural bias to affectation, vanity, foolish imaginations, or even unchaste passion, or rivet, in the youthful mind, some unsound maxim by means of an alluring art, if he act in consistency with his principles, he will spurn from him the gilded bauble, and on no account allow it admission in his plan of religious education.

The little regard, paid, by religious parents to this particular branch of accomplishment, is one cause why sacred music wins not the love of their children. In how many instances is the talent, cultivated at home with so much care and expense, permitted to lie torpid in the great congregation! If it be pleaded, that Psalmody is at so low an ebb, that it presents no inducement to unite,—with whom does the responsibility rest, but with such, as use not their advantages to reform the erring, and instruct the ignorant. Let a parent, in the education of his daughter, seek to implant a love for sacred song, strengthen it by a firm breast-work of youthful associations, direct its operations in consonance with the establishment of every virtuous principle and habit, and he will find the example fruitful in expedients to remedy the existing abuses. Instead of sitting with a joyless heart and a tuneless tongue, while the high praises of God are echoing through his courts, precept, custom, and inclination will combine to urge the exercise of sacred talent. And thus music with all its fascinations, no longer wasting its strength upon empty conceits and romantic imaginations, or

opening the sluices of impure desire, will subserve its original design to cherish the feeling of divine love in the heart, and give play to its expression.

Music is, comparatively speaking, so little cultivated, in this country, by the men, that they seem to have been almost excluded from the above remarks. Natural taste will however occasionally overcome the frivolous prejudices, which denounce the art as unmanly; and in most families some individual of the ruder sex contrives to humanize his feelings, by a slight attention to singing, or playing on the flute. The range indeed of musical enjoyment is apt to be needlessly narrowed, by a gratuitous preference of inferior instruments. Thus the most manly, because the most comprehensive, as an individual instrument, the Piano Forte, is shunned by almost every one, who desires to preserve his character for a charge of effeminacy. Till these cobwebs of absurd prejudice are swept away, music must more or less suffer, taste must still submit to be smothered under imaginary proprieties, and talent sacrificed on the altar of fashion.

But even where the art attracts the attention of the men, neither the instruments, nor compositions chosen, are calculated to foster a taste for devotional harmonies. The full, rich, and stately character of the chorale, or the abounding and scientific combinations of the anthem, bear but a slender resemblance to the thin melodies of the German flute, or the jovial chorus of a hunting-song. When awoke, the musical energies of the men are generally expended upon objects of a purely worldly nature. The pleasing harmonies of glee music may redeem a fine tenor or bass voice, from no higher application than an halloo after the hounds. Some Scotch reel may strike the fancy, and entice to the practice of the German

flute. A love for foreign customs may attract attention to the guitar; and occasionally, a taste for social music may place the manly violoncello between the knees. Still all this, as it proceeds from worldly affections, tends only to worldly gratifications. Neither violoncello, guitar, flute, bugle, nor voice is exercised for private, social, or public devotion. The violoncello subserves the high treat of a quartetto or quintetto party,—the guitar relieves the ornamental graces of a flowing voice—the blast of the bugle recalls sportive associations—the flute runs abreast with the flying finger of the piano—and glees harmonize with the feelings of some jovial party of young men, who are inclined, rather to welcome reckless hilarity, than moralize with old Herbert:

> When youth is frank and free
> And calls for music, while his veins do swell,
> All day exchanging mirth and breath
> In company:
> That music summons to the knell,
> Which shall befriend him at the house of death![1]

But 'how much happier were it for persons of choice parts to employ them as Bezaleel and Aholiab did theirs, in working for the sanctuary. The structure will not alone deserve the skilfullest hand; but, though it reject not goats'-hair and coloured badger-skins, will admit not only purple and fine twined linen, but gold, silver, and precious stones; the richest ornaments being not only merited by that heavenly subject, but being applicable to it, as much to their own advantage, as to that of their theme.'[2]

II. Another cause, why the practice of sacred music is so greatly neglected, is the general indiffer-

[1] The Temple-Mortification. [2] Boyle on the Scriptures, p. 143.

ence to the art. An opinion has been already hazarded concerning the degree of credit, due to the frequent assertion of a total want of musical perception. Neglect of the talent,—the many obstacles thrown in the way of its developement,—the certain truth, that in physics as in morals, faculties unemployed will in time become so deadened, as to show no evidence of their existence, may well excuse those, who ascribe much of this complaint to a want of discrimination, between a natural defect and an acquired imbecility. The distinction is of importance, since however low the fire should have burnt, if there remain the principle of heat, a spark may be resuscitated, and a flame restored; whereas otherwise, the most energetic efforts necessarily fail of effect.

The confession of natural incapacity is however frequently accompanied with an air of nonchalance, as though the loss were not deserving of much lamentation: nay, in some cases, there is discernible a tone of triumph, as if the very defect were a proof of superior manliness,—that the mind was not formed for so feminine an accomplishment.[1] Yet if the opinions contained in this volume concerning the value, importance, and beauty of music be admitted to be just, an individual has no more reason to

[1] The author of the 'Praise of Musicke' seems to allude to such persons, when he speaks of those 'men who, as if they came of some finer mould, like well enough of musicke in others, but cannot away with it in themselves. They are delighted with the well proportioned pictures of Jupiter and Venus, but yet would not be Phidias or Praxiteles. Examine their reasons, they are as rare as black swannes; unless perchaunce they answere, as church-fools are wont: 'they will not for their mindes' sake.' And why not they, as well as other men? They are belike of a better broode. Be it so, let them pleade their privilege, but so far forthe as they seeke not to dishonour thinges as honourable as themselves. Some indeede do it, not so much of despite as of daintinesse, for they are well enough content to take all the pleasure they can by it, and yet take as greate pleasure to discontent those that afford it.' —Praise of Musicke, pp. 32, 33.

congratulate himself over his want of preception, than a blind or deaf man may exult in his ignorance of the benefits enjoyed by an unstopped ear and opened eye. Musical perception is a sense, if not so necessary as sight, yet no less cheering in its present application, and rich in the prospect of an eternity of enjoyment. He who would caress his infirmity, may strengthen his comforts by the consideration, that, unless his defect is remedied in the celestial regions, he will be the only one of the angelic and saintly purities, who has neither voice nor harp of thanksgiving, and knows nothing of a rapture, the intensity of which is alone equalled by its eternity.

'Such harmony is in immortal souls.'

He who is visited, by the Divine hand, with some defect or infirmity, deserves and receives commiseration. But if he obtrude it upon his neighbours as a subject of congratulation—unless he be a madman

'Laughing wild amid severest woe,'—

he tempts the application of the well known lines:

'The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils:
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted.

It is moreover no argument for the disuse of a natural gift, that it is of a low order. The possessor of the one talent in the Gospel was no more excused from his duty of trading with it, than his more favoured brethren. Nor does Scripture any where authorize the neglect to cultivate an endowment, because of its comparative insignificance. On the contrary every precept enjoined, as well as every example proposed for imitation, urge the undoubted

exercise of every gift, especially such as directly conduce to spiritual blessing. If the heart be once thoroughly impressed with the importance of the duty, divine grace would assist amazingly the feeblest efforts. No faculty, implanted in the soul, ever shrunk under the influence of true religion. A proof of this is afforded by one, whose whole life was an act of jealousy over self: 'Since I have known God in a saving manner,' says Henry Martyn, 'poetry, painting, and music have had charms, unknown to me before. I have received what I suppose is a taste for them, for religion has refined my mind, and made it susceptible of impressions from the sublime and beautiful.'[1]

In fact the less talent an individual possesses, the more call is made upon him to cherish it. God will undoubtedly bless him in its exercise—and while he resists the careless and proud confession of inability, he will give grace to the humble and busy occupier of the slender gift, which may, slowly perhaps, but surely, bring forth its hundred fold for the ingathering of the harvest.

III. A third cause why the practice of music is neglected, though founded upon erroneous reasoning, deserves respect, as it is supposed to operate chiefly on conscientious minds. It is the dread of temptation,—the fear lest an alluring art, which is presumed to rank only as an amusement, should enervate the spirit, and intrude upon the more serious business of life. The risk of its usurping a higher station, than that to which it is entitled, is considered sufficiently great, to authorize an act of self-denial in rejecting its pursuit. Thus instances might be adduced, in which certain characters have been pro-

[1] Martyn's Life, p. 61.

posed as examples, for having early quashed their attachment to the art, by 'hot and peevish vows' against its exercise, burning their music books, and cutting their fiddle-strings. Such conduct, however, when examined upon sound principles, seems as little deserving commendation as an act of suicide. Those, inclined to question the wisdom of a man who should

> 'Bear the whips and scorns of time,
> When he himself might his quietus make,
> By a bare bodkin'—

may indeed hesitate, whether the total annihilation of a possible source of temptation, or the retaining it under the frown and fetters of a high command, displays the greater courage. In the common concerns of life, no man who turns his back upon his enemy, is applauded as a hero. The greater proof of bravery is to face him in battle, and the greater proof of strength is to overcome him in actual conflict. To flee every shadow of temptation is a more manifest acknowledgment of weakness, than to overcome the object of temptation, and keep it subject to the laws of obedience.

If moreover it be a proof of superior strength of mind, to keep under restraint, rather than to exterminate, an object of innocent delight, it is surely also a sign of superior wisdom. The main business of life ever brings with it moments of anxiety, vexation, and lassitude. At such times the mind yearns to seek for some source of temporary consolation. How unwise then to destroy an art which tends to soothe the feelings, and lull to rest the self-destroying energies of a turbid spirit. And when the remedy proposed is considered in its true light as the especial gift of God, how ungrateful as well as unwise!

He, whose days in wilful woe are worn,
The grace of his Creator doth despise,
That will not use his gifts for thankless niggardize.

The dread that it should engross too much time is often a mere hallucination. The serious occupations of an active life will be an effectual antidote to an overweening attachment. Youthful susceptibilities, however strong, soon yield to the more manly and determinate pursuits of maturer age; and, amid the pressure of business, the deep calls upon time, and the cares of a family, music falls naturally into its proper position, as the enlivener of an hour of leisure.

While however solitary examples may be noted, in which minds, really musical, have from principle discouraged the culture of the art, there are many who, without any just claim to self-denial, assume to themselves the same credit as an excuse for indolence. It is not uncommon to meet with persons, who congratulate themselves, that they have escaped the fascinations of music, by being kept without the sphere of its temptation. This feeling of complacency, they tell you, springs not from indifference, but from their extreme susceptibility to musical impressions, which, if early encouraged, would certainly have surmounted all propriety, and consumed that time, which has now been so successfully devoted to theology, mathematics, classics, or the law.

To console us under this magnanimous display of self-denial, which, if general, would rob the world of many a Haydn and Mozart, it is only requisite to sound its real merit. When such remarks are made under the influence of a momentary enthusiasm, it will frequently be found, that, instead of some mighty musical genius having been permitted to slumber out its existence, there is a real defect of musical perception, unknown perhaps to the individual himself,

who mistakes the degree and kind of his pleasures and powers—a defect which would be the surest guard against too unlimited a devotion to its practice. Thus when we hear our great moralist declare his persuasion, that 'if he had learnt music he should have been afraid he would have done nothing else but play'—our fears for him immediately subside upon his confession, 'that the extent of his knowledge of music was, that he knew a drum from a trumpet, and a bagpipe from a guitar,' and upon the evidence of his taste, afforded by his fondness for the bagpipe, 'delighting to stand for some time with his ear close to the great drone.'[1] Who would not regret, that Dr. Johnson should have neglected what slight cultivation such a natural infirmity was capable of, from fear of a consequence as remote, as that an elephant should be tempted to study and imbibe the metaphysical reasoning of some infidel philosopher, from the mere exercise of his instinct.

But how is an individual to act, who has an internal passionate energy for musical strains, with a most treacherous want of self-command. Had he not better cast aside the art altogether, than retain it, a continued and daily source of temptation? If in reply we argue upon mere worldly principles, an

[1] Boswell's Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, L.L.D. pp. 319, 320.

Not always is the reception of the bagpipe such as to gratify its vanity:—

> Now when amid the thickest woodes they were,
> They heard a noyse of many bagpipes shrill,
> And shrieking hubbubs them approaching nere,
> Which all the forest did with horrour fill;
> That dreadful sound the boster's heart did thrill
> With such amazement, that in haste he fledd,
> Ne ever looked back for good or ill;
> And after him eke fearful Trompart spedd.
> The old man could not fly, but fell to ground half dead.
>
> FAERY QUEENE, Book III. chap. x. stanza 43.

affirmative might be returned—if upon religious, a decided negative. We are indeed warned in Scripture to flee temptations, but they are evidently classed with things in their own nature sinful—Satan and worldly lusts. Where therefore an object of temptation is directly and inherently sinful, it is our duty to cut it off, even though it be as dear to us as a right hand or a right eye. If it be sinful, only through excessive indulgence, we have no more authority to pluck it up by the roots, than we have to starve ourselves because food is in its abuse an evil, and therefore may become a source of temptation. In fact without this distinction, no gift of God can be received—no blessing enjoyed—the child that is born may proceed by the shortest road from its mother's womb to the grave, for though there is spread around it a table of bounties, there is engraved in large characters upon its leaves: 'Touch not, taste not, handle not.'

There is, however, a natural as well as spiritual obligation resting upon every man, to sustain his existence by the means placed before him, nor is that obligation dispensed with, though burdened with temptation. There is equally a natural and spiritual obligation to improve a talent bestowed by the Divine hand, nor is that obligation dispensed with, though burdened with temptation. The employment of a musical talent has moreover a particular command in the revealed will of God, and there is not a syllable there to warrant an exception. Whosoever then dares, upon any pretence, to hide his talent in a napkin, does so at his peril,—it is a bold and gratuitous act, unauthorized by Scripture, and for which no possible array of temptation, or state of spiritual weakness can apologize. Had its destruction been needful in any case, it had been excepted in the book

of God,—there is no such exception, therefore the command is universal.

How then is a young Christian to act? He feels his own weakness—his salvation is at stake, and he sees lamentable proofs around him, that by attachment to things in themselves pure and designed for blessing, many have committed shipwreck of their faith. The answer is plain. God is not the author of temptation. Every creature of His is good, and to be received with thanksgiving. He 'tempts no man, but every man is tempted of his own lusts.' If then God commands, our weakness is no bar to the fulfilment of his commands, but the exact contrary. There is no spiritual grace or temporal gift, that a man can sustain by his own powers. Is he then authorized to neglect or destroy them, when his salvation unequivocally depends upon his 'working it out with fear and trembling' by their daily and diligent culture? No! The conviction of that weakness impels the sincere Christian to seek for strength, where alone it can be obtained; and he then finds, that though he can do nothing of himself, 'he can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth him.' He shuns not therefore a blessing on account of its attendant temptation, but, praying to be preserved from the infection of that temptation, continues the busy exercise of the gift in humility and faith. Instead of seeking to crush his talent, the Christian displays his real strength of mind and nobility of character, in affording it every encouragement of which it is susceptible, imploring divine support against the temptations which wait upon it, and devoting it body, soul, and spirit, to the service of his Master. And thus from the very source whence the worldly man—the self-confident as well as the open libertine—drinks draughts of deadly delusion,

he, by the strength of his God, would be able to derive a rich and enlivening cordial.

> 'Each in himself, the means
> Possessed to turn the bitter, sweet, the sweet
> To bitter. Hence, from out the self-same fount,
> One nectar drank, another draughts of gall;
> One discord heard where harmony inclined
> Another's ear. The sweet was in the taste,
> The beauty in the eye, and in the ear
> The melody: and in the man, for God
> Necessity of sinning laid on none,
> To form the taste, to purify the eye,
> And tune the ear, that all he tasted, saw,
> Or heard, might be harmonious, sweet, and fair:
> Who would, might groan: who would, might sing for joy.'[1]

From these considerations we may infer, that the duty of encouraging by personal example the practice of Church music is incumbent upon all classes of the community. Upon the young—that it may pre-occupy ground, otherwise seized upon by Satan to nourish evil passions, and pervert the unsophisticated taste:—on those of slender talent—that *that* talent may yet be devoted to the glory of the Giver, and not be suffered to moulder away in its shell:—on the timid and scrupulous,—that they may not, by mis-apprehension, forge voluntary fetters for their own freedom, 'make sad whom the Lord hath not made sad,' and thus do dishonour to Him, by heaping hard names upon the gifts of His hand:—but especially on parents and instructors, that they may rivet, by early association, the alliance between music and devotion. The very nursery may, and frequently does, become a school of piety;—the mother, winning

[1] Pollok's Course of Time, Book V. p. 152.

her child's attention to the simplest, and at the same time the richest truths, by means of sacred song. And those only, who have had the advantage of such an artless mode of instruction in their childhood, can estimate its value, when in the turbulent scenes of after life, though many an intermediate association for good or evil has passed away, the little hymn, chanted by a fond mother, as a lullaby to slumber, comes rushing upon the mind, in all the freshness of infantine emotion.

So seldom is the practice of sacred music admitted in the general plan of education, whether at home or in schools, that the advantages resulting from it are almost conjectural. Yet are they not unworthy of consideration: and when we observe to what extent schools are multiplying in the country, it is surely high time, to propose a word in favour of an art, which demands attention from dissenter as well as churchman, proportioned to its importance as a stimulator of youthful feeling.

The advantages arising from the early practice of sacred music may be considered of two kinds, immediate and prospective.

I. Of the immediate advantages, mental recreation merits the first notice. Few question, because few are ignorant of, the power of music to enliven the spirits, refresh the weariness incident upon intellectual exertions, and calm the many perturbations which harass 'a soul diseased.' These effects indeed may attend the mere hearing of musical strains, without any practical acquaintance with the art. Yet in every pursuit that has a beneficial influence upon the mind or body, independence is of inestimable value; and he who would refuse to learn to read, because he could occasionally command the reading of others, would forget the many thousand obstacles, which

might deprive him of this assistance, perhaps when most needed. But besides this, there is a pleasure in the very initiatory exercises, of which the mere casual hearer knows nothing. The labour attending it—the occasional obstacles just sufficient to whet the appetite —the gratification of having surmounted the first elements, and the novelties that open upon the mind and ear as knowledge gradually increases—all conduce to heighten the natural enjoyment. And when once the delights of the ear are not materially affected by the uncertainty of the memory, or the clumsiness of the finger, and the performer is able to execute passages with freedom, he then possesses a means of recreating his spirits under all circumstances, whether they be bewildered by sorrow, fatigued by study, or enervated by sickness. The man of reading, who is exposed to every kind of mental fatigue and lassitude, finds it of especial service. Instead of toiling on in unsatisfactory and painful exertions, after the mind has lost its elasticity—a slight interval of musical indulgence restores the faculties to their wonted tone, and enables them to pursue their course fresh and vigorous to the goal.

But an objection has been started, that the mind is apt to be weakened by musical pursuits. Now music cannot certainly be considered in its own nature an intellectual enjoyment. The study of its mechanism does unquestionably demand some degree of mental exertion ; yet there are many, who have an acute sense of the sublime and beautiful in music,—are able to express themselves with great felicity and readiness of execution, feeling, and emphasis, who possess little or no knowledge of the internal structure of a composition. If therefore an individual devotes his whole time, as some doubtless do, to the bare cramming of musical feeling, it may readily be supposed,

that the intellect will not only be unbenefited, but rendered actually torpid, by the perfect inaction of its energies. Musicians who are all musicians—ever occupied with wire and catgut,

'Quavering and semiquavering care away,'

—busied from morning to night with the ordinary common-places of their profession,—whose learning is confined to the technical terms of the art, and the names of fashionable performers,—and whose conversation never advances beyond a discussion of the rivalrous distinctions of the last concert, or the idle revelry of the last dinner—such men are, and must remain the most contemptible of those, who claim the education of gentlemen. They are living entirely upon sauces; and it is therefore no wonder, if the mind wear down to a skeleton. The evil consequence rests not with the art itself, but its improper application. For surely there is a wide distinction between the occasional and sparing use of music as a relish, and the continued gorging of it, as the chief or only means of sustenance. Confine music to its proper sphere, and you find it admirably calculated to answer its proper end. Urge it to an excess, or to a purpose for which it was never designed, and it shares the properties of every other blessing—it becomes a bane. In fact, it possesses exactly that quality, which pure intellectual pursuits have not;—they fatigue the mind, it refreshes it—they wear out its powers, it sustains and renews them,—they fill it with thoughts and images, it connects them by association with the imagination and affections. Both therefore should mutually assist each other; and the example of such men as St. Austin, Luther, Milton, Sir W. Jones, Bp. Horne may be surely permitted to outweigh the light fears of those, who tremble at consequences

which they never saw, and pass judgment upon properties, which they never examined. The loss of such students is their own, who, in dread of an idle phantom, reject a mode of refreshment so natural, so soothing, and so effectual! Milton in his 'Tractate on Education' presses this advantage upon the attention of all directors of youth. 'The interim of unsweating themselves regularly, and convenient rest before meat, may, both with profit and delight, be taken up in recreating and composing their travailed spirits with the solemn and divine harmonies of music heard or learnt, either while the skilful organist plies his grave and fancied descant, in lofty fugues, or in unimaginable touches adorns and graces the well-studied chords of some choice composer,—sometimes the lute or soft organ-stop waiting on elegant voices either to religious, material, or civil ditties; which, if wise men and prophets be not extremely out, have a great power over dispositions and manners, to smoothe and make them gentle from rustic harshness and distempered passions.'[1] It is however to be feared, that this assumed consequence, of freeing men from 'rustic harshness and distempered passions,' is more plausible in theory, than true in practice. During the act of performance indeed, the mind of even the most outrageous may be calmed: but unless music operate as the direct means of transfusing virtuous ideas,—which was the case among the Greeks, by whom these effects are especially ascribed,—it will seldom avail eventually to soften the manners, regulate evil passion, and humanize what is naturally savage and barbarous. It is too lamentable a truth, that some of our very first musicians were men, rude in their habits, violent in their tempers, and de-

[1] Letter to Mr. Hartlibb.

bauched in their morals. While, however, the mere cultivation of the art as an art, cannot be expected to eradicate evil principles, whether in morals or in manners, there can be no question, but when applied to the purposes of devotion, it will not merely lull and relieve an o'erburdened mind, but effectually dispense that divine grace, which is ever imparted in this world, as by measure, so by means.[1]

II. Another immediate advantage, which attends musical practice, is the relief which it affords to the body. Without pressing upon the supernatural and medicinal properties which have been, perhaps superstitiously, attributed to music, Milton assigns it an influence less open to cavil. After recommending musical exercise before meat, as a relief to the mind, he advises it also after meat as a relief to the body. 'The like also would not be unexpedient after meat, to assist and cherish nature in her first concoction, and send their minds back to study in good tune and satisfaction.'[2] The influence that the body has upon the mind when in a state of indigestion and disease, clogging the intellect, depressing the energies, and enervating the will, is of too general experience to be questioned. This, if at all a remedy is simple and worthy of trial; that, if it affect not a deranged system, it may at any rate conduce to aid the digestive process in a healthy subject. Repose and

[1] Thus it is related of Herbert, that during his Cambridge course, 'he found it his greatest diversion from his study,' and bore this willing testimony to its power: 'That it did relieve his drooping spirits, compose his distracted thoughts, and raise his weary soul so far above earth, that it gave him an earnest of the joys of Heaven, before he possessed them.' —Walton's Life.

[2] Letter to Mr. Hartlibb. Milton practised what he recommended; for in the account of his day's occupation, we find that his custom was after dinner, to play on the organ, and sing, or hear another sing. Johnson's Life of Milton.

satisfaction are the two grand requisites of a good digestion, and these are the handmaids of music.

Singing is particularly recommended by Mr. Bedford, 'as an exercise not only delightful to nature, but also very useful to preserve the health. It cheers the spirits, it opens the pipes, and it strengthens all the parts of the breast.'[1] Reason confirms experience in avouching the truth of this fact; for the unforced exercise of any faculty is sure to improve and strengthen it. That singing is the natural exercise of the voice may be seen in children, who, without instruction, or further excitement than lively spirits, of their own accord express their feelings in song. As the man grows up, custom, care, and indolence combine to curb this natural manifestation of delight; and many a noble voice, whose tones in speaking display its real richness, depth, power, or sweetness, is suffered, as a musical instrument, to rust disused. This is the more to be regretted, as the mere exercise of the voice in singing carries with it its own reward; and the man, who sacrifices his powers to the frown of an idle fashion, deprives himself of a great fund of personal gratification.

> 'Music exalts each joy, allays each grief,
> Expels diseases, softens every pain,
> Subdues the rage of poison and the plague,
> And hence the wise of ancient days adored,
> One power of physic, melody, and song.'[2]

III. If however the practice of music prevail neither to cheer the spirits, nor assist the health, it may surely serve to employ moments, otherwise spent in idleness

[1] Bedford would seem to have got the hint of this recommendation from an old preface of Bird's, prefixed to 'Psalms, Sonnets, and Songs of Sadnes and Pietie of five partes. 1588,' in which 'the Auctor sets downe many reasons to persuade every one to learne to singe.' See Burney's History of Music, Vol. III. p. 84. note.

[2] Armstrong.

or debauchery. The universities and public schools may indeed be supposed to possess, in the very nature of their studies, a remedy against these banes of society, whereby the noblest flowers are blighted in the very spring-time of their promise. But if, even in large public institutions for education, individuals are to be found tinctured with idle and dissipating vices, yet more is it the case in places, where youth is ripening, without the checks of stern discipline and regular employment. How many parents are watching with aching hearts the shootings of a wild and irregular spirit in a beloved child, which, in spite of reproof and kindness, are exhausting the life-juices in indolent indulgence or unblushing debauch ! They discern activity of spirit, combined with aversion to regular pursuit—the mind alive, but the slave of evil appetites—or they mark a general disinclination to all exertion, the precursor either of disease, or of increasing ungodliness. Why then resort they not to music, the only means left to arouse the dormant energies, and make the will itself discipline the habits, even of the wildest ? How would it seize upon the wandering affections, and, by occupying the vacant hours, be the means of rescuing youth from the contagion of bad example, or the indulgence of bad habits !

The near connexion between idleness and vice may be daily noticed in common life. Many, who would shrink from Watts's methodism, are obliged practically to assent to his assertion, that

> Satan finds some mischief still
> For idle hands to do,

and it should therefore be an object with parents and tutors, to regulate as well the recreations, as the more important avocations of youth. Some children, naturally sprightly, readily engage in the boisterous

games of their companions—others of a more studious cast prefer reading and conversation,—but there are ever characters, unwilling to work and unwilling to play, dawdling away the hour of diversion, and only arousing themselves to unite in some act of disobedience, mischief, or cruelty. Try such then with music. It is the only resource left; and if it succeeds 'you have gained your son.' The affections once arrested upon a virtuous employment—the energies once aroused to a good purpose,—may the readier be sustained upon the more important concerns of after life, and the wild and reckless youth may thus gradually be moulded into the staid and useful man.

To render however the reformation effectual, musical talent and taste must be directed into a sacred channel; else there is danger, lest the remedy itself become the means of temptation. The bold and unblushing defence, set up for the separation of education and religion, is one of the most awful signs of the times. We must leave posterity to mourn our infatuation. To dissolve the connection between religion and music were equally ruinous, unless God be content to surrender his claims upon that love, which forms the basis of all acceptable service. The parent, therefore, who encourages a musical taste, is only employing half measures, unless he associate it with devotional practice. Though he substitutes exertion for inactivity, it is otherwise but the fitful struggles of the imprisoned eagle, beating itself to death against the bars of its cage. His efforts, however successful to regulate inconsistencies, and reform irregularities, will be comprehended in Solomon's words: 'Vanity and vexation of spirit.'

This argument in favour of music is especially deserving the attention of our country clergy. The occupations indeed of the young men of a village

necessarily preclude much leisure for practice, but they afford some ; and whoever is acquainted with rural habits must know, that a summer-evening frequently presents scenes, better according with the scriptural views of human depravity, than with the reveries of poets. The young men come home, fatigued with their labours, without either inclination or perhaps power to engage in reading. They lounge about the doors of their cottages, group together in idle conversation, join in some project of cruelty or mischief, or throng the alehouse-benches, dealing in scandal, and learning habits of drunkenness. Where then is music, an art the practice of which involves neither the weariness of bodily toil, nor the natural unwillingness to intellectual exertion ! And what an opportunity for the clergyman to ward off evil example, and seek to instil scriptural truth through an alluring medium ! That there is no lack of musical sentiment, even in the most untutored mind, may be seen in the greediness, with which a motley group of all ages, classes, and complexions, pounce at such a time upon some strolling musician, and drink in the sounds emitted from his hurdy-gurdy, kit, or barrel-organ. And ' hence it is,' as an old writer quaintly observes, ' that manual labourers, and mechanical artificers, keepe such a chaunting and singing in their shoppes, the tailor on his bulk, the shoe-maker at his last, the mason at his wall, the ship-boy at his oare, the tinker at his pan, and the tyler on the house-top.' [1] Why then not encourage this natural love of song, and direct it to a good purpose ? Why should not every English village echo on a summer-evening with sound of wind and stringed instruments, tuned and exercised, not for idle merriment, but to enliven the public service on the approaching sabbath ?

[1] Praise of Musicke, p. 44.

IV. A further recommendation to the early culture of music will not be considered trivial by the sincere Christian, in the mental serenity which arises from the conviction, that a responsible talent is thus applied to its proper end. This need in no respect degenerate into self-sufficiency; and is no more to be confounded with it, than is the triumphant language of St. Paul,[1] with the self-approbation of a conceited formalist. Some degree of that 'peace passing all understanding,' promised in Scripture, ever accompanies an endeavour to fulfil the will of God; and the exercise of a gift, in obedience to that revealed will, is not destitute of its present reward. In fact, the inward comfort, joy, and evenness of temper which attend it, form of themselves a concert of according harmonies. Thus believers carry with them, throughout their daily engagements, the spring of all musical gratifications. They gladly avail themselves of any occasion that presents itself, morning or evening, at home or abroad, at leisure or in business, for raising their song of praise, because their heart is always tuned for it.

'There are in this loud stunning tide
Of human care and crime,
With whom the melodies abide
Of the everlasting chime;
Who carry music in their heart
Thro' dusky lane and wrangling mart,
Plying their daily tasks with busier feet,
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat.'[2]

'Cheerfulness,' says Bishop Taylor, 'and a festival spirit fill the soul full of harmony; it composes music for churches and hearts; it makes and publishes glorifications of God; it produces thankfulness, and serves the end of charity; and when the oil of gladness runs over, it makes tall and bright emissions

[1] 2 Tim. iv. 7. [2] The Christian Year.

of light, and holy fires, reaching up to a cloud, and making joy round about: and therefore since it is so innocent, and may be so pious and full of holy advantage, whatsoever can innocently minister to this holy joy, does set forward the work of religion and charity.' [1]

V. But among the immediate advantages, the most valuable, if not the most common, is spiritual edification. To effect this, music should be free, as well from vapidity and want of religious meaning, as from every kind of impurity and idle sentiment. It should be of a decidedly devotional character; otherwise the question of our Lord might apply: 'Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?' It is not absolutely necessary for this purpose that the music should be vocal; for, as has been observed, if the mind be suitably disposed, the chords of an instrument may speak a language sufficiently intelligible, by the mere force of association. The end however is more commonly obtained by music applied to words either scripture, or in accordance with scripture. In the instances we shall shortly cite of its prospective advantages, it will be seen that almost all, who have been induced to record the high spiritual enjoyment they found in devotional music, had in some degree refined their perceptions by practice in early youth. Passing by examples, it may however be worth while to notice a somewhat triumphant assertion occasionally made, that no instance of conversion can be traced to musical impressions. Admitting for a moment the truth of this assertion, is edification, however subordinate in degree, so slight a matter, that we can view any auxiliary, as a mere supernumerary in the work of salvation? Shall we reject the practice of an art, universally admitted to

[1] Taylor's Works, Vol. v. p. 343.

minister solace in trouble, and instil courage in difficulties? But who shall shorten the arm of God, and deem that he has applied to its spiritual influence the command: 'Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further?' If its abuse has been unhappily the means of destruction to many souls, why may not its legitimate use serve to arrest the sinner on his course towards destruction? It is true, that the grand means, ordained for this important end, is the preaching of the word; but is the word preached only from the pulpit? Is it not preached in the reading of the Scriptures, in the public liturgy, in the administration of the Sacraments, in social religious converse, in the chamber of the sick, in private meditation—and why not therefore in the song of praise? There seems no reason, if the word of God be indeed spirit and life, why it should be confined to one mode of operation, and not, assuming 'such a body as it pleaseth Him,' carry conviction to the heart, as well by the means of devout harmonies, as by the mere dry sound of the human voice. Although music in itself be only the bare medium, yet unquestionably the word conveyed by it, if scripture, or the idea, if scriptural, shall share the undying promise, nor fall to the ground without its fruit.

It is difficult to illustrate these remarks by recorded examples,[1] and instances adduced in the course of familiar conversation, however satisfactory to him who vouches for the credibility of the narrator, would hardly pass current, where the mind is proof against all reasoning from theory. It may not be uninteresting, and in some degree, supply the place of such anecdotes to transcribe from a letter already quoted,[2] the unvarnished testimony of the writer,

[1] The reader will find an instance in print in the Christian Guardian, Vol. xiii. p. 142.

[2] See page 83.

that 'music was one of those means, whereby he was made attentive to his spiritual concerns.' 'From my earliest infancy,' he writes 'every kind of musical sound immediately attracted my attention. I heard no silly and profane ditties, but the tunes and anthems of the Church sunk with their solemn chords into my soul. All musical combinations of sound delighted me, but particularly those called chromatic, and they were intended to be the vehicle, not of intellectual pleasure only, but of a divine influence.'

'When I was about six years old, I heard sung during the Passion-week an anthem commencing with the words: '*O that to this heavenly stranger, I had here my homage paid.*' What I then felt I cannot express in words. Even now, half a century after, I have a faint repetition of my sensations, when I hear that anthem; nay even while I am writing this, in the midst of the Atlantic ocean.[1] While the sweet and plaintive strains in that devotional composition occupied all my attention, I was most powerfully struck and affected by the sentiment conveyed by them to my heart. I formed, as well as I could at that time, a resolution to live alone for that Saviour who had suffered so much for me. I certainly should have been at a loss to have described the nature of my feelings, and the purpose of my heart, but it was a genuine work of God's spirit, and whenever any thing in music brought that air and its words into my mind, my eyes were filled with tears, and my affections were drawn heavenward.'

'There were some other musical pieces, which I remember to have heard with an effect similar to this; such as: Handel's 'Behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow;' 'He was despised and rejected of men;' and a number of hymn-tunes,

[1] The letter was written during a voyage to the Cape of Good Hope.

the recollection of which, even at my play, would check my spirit, too prone to levity, and introduce into my mind, a few passing thoughts upon the necessity of conversion.'

The former quotation from this letter alluded to the circumstance of the writer having spent some of his early years in Germany, where he had peculiar opportunities for cultivating a musical taste, and where, at one of the settlements of the Moravian Church, in conjunction with others, he rendered the gratuitous service, of accompanying the congregation on the organ. He now proceeds to point out how this duty became a means of blessing. Having a good musical memory he found little trouble in playing the tunes, many of them rich in chromatic combinations, without the aid of a tune-book. 'However there was one which I could not remember, but always made some blunder in playing it. It was a very plain, easy tune, and I could not conceive what possessed me, that I was unable to play that, as well as others. I must confess that, at that time, it was the music alone that engaged all my attention; the words I troubled myself very little about. One of my fellow organists, to whom I complained of the difficulty of learning that particular tune, advised me first to learn the words of the hymn, assuring me, that by so doing, the music would accompany the words in my mind, and I should soon get firm in playing it. I followed his advice.' The hymn was founded upon that Scripture passage: 'My son, give me thy heart.' 'Once however when I was beginning to sing, I was suddenly roused from my spiritual lethargy, and came into a train of reflections, which ended in my crying for mercy, and I now prayed, sung, and played that hymn with a heart lifted up to the Lord, that he would take and make me his own.'

' How often the sweet strains of devotional music have in a manner haunted my mind at home or abroad, and brought with them a recurrence of the impression, made upon my heart by the words which they accompanied, I cannot here enumerate. I have told you, how music was very early made a means of blessing to my soul; and I can only say, that it has continued to be such by the mercy of my Saviour to this time, for I have not lost anything of that quick sense of its beauty and power which I first possessed. It has rather increased, and I hope, will accompany me beyond the grave.'

These are a few of the most powerful inducements to the culture of music in early life. Its salutary effects upon the health and spirits ; its aid in enabling the exhausted mind to recover its tone, the restraints it imposes upon indolence and evil habits ; the satisfaction, and above all the edification attending its conscientious pursuit, might be supposed to present argument sufficient, to induce the sacrifice of a few youthful hours to its cultivation. If, with all his advantages, man remains mute, the very objects in nature, that meet his eye and ear at every turn, rebuke his negligence and ingratitude. *They* claim not his musical capabilities, and yet how actively do they employ such as they possess. How do not the woods resound with the joyous notes of innumerable songsters, unskilled indeed in musical proportions, because unendowed with a capacity to comprehend them, but rolling forth from their little throats strains, rich in every quality with which God blessed them, and only devoid of those which he denied them. And how should not man blush to suffer powers, which enable him not merely to sing, but to sing with the understanding also, to lie torpid, while all things around him teem with examples of the unforced exercise of

natural gifts! 'Wherefore when thou seest each fowle in his kinde, the linnet, the nightingale, and lark, to mount aloft and singe their notes unto the skies, shewe thyself docile in those two thinges: first, in acknowledging the delight which both thou takest in them and they in musicke; and secondly learne by their example, what thy duty is, and ought to be, in grateful singing of psalmes and songes to Him that made thee.' [1]

But these immediate advantages are not the only inducement to the early practice of music. Its full benefits embrace a far more extended range; having a direct bearing upon the whole of a man's enjoyments in time, no less than his prospects in eternity.

I. The first prospective advantage, therefore, proposed to the youthful practitioner, is the personal comfort to be derived from it in after-life. In this world there are cares and anxieties, from which no age or condition is totally exempt. At such seasons of depression, we often take a fond retrospective glance at those days, when the spirits were naturally more buoyant, and the conscience less burdened. Youthful associations *then* are valued, and, if good, valuable. They rush upon the mind, frequently uncalled, but never unwelcome; rich in blessings while they last, and when gone, sweet in the remembrance. If connected with religion the more they are multiplied, the greater store of comfort is laid up for the often untimely winter of chilling sorrow. Allusion has been made in a former paper to the

[1] Praise of Musicke, p. 50.

influence which a devotional strain, long forgotten, but recurring in an hour of temptation, may have in checking sin and dispelling sorrow. By a rooted acquaintance with the art in youth, and the dedication of it to religious purposes, the effects of such associations would be multiplied in number, and increased in power. In an earlier period of our history, music was so closely connected with external devotion, and external devotion with the habits of society, that the minds of people generally were more susceptible of such impressions than at present. The value of musical associations, in those ages, when the dark cloud of Romish superstition rested upon our land, can be known only in eternity. Church music was almost the only jewel not debased, or rendered counterfeit. 'The monasteries were schools of devotional music, and many times during the day, the voices of the choir were heard swelling from the neighbouring abbey 'over some wide-watered shore.' The labourer, as he woke with the sun, to his accustomed toil, or, as in southern climates, he reposed from the heat of the burning noon, or, as he lingered weary on his return at evening to his dwelling; the traveller at midnight—all were reminded of the Heavenly Father and Redeemer by the solemn strain of the organ from the commanding minster, or the sweeter, and gentler voices which pealed from the chapel of the convent.'[1] Now few would venture to assert, that the feelings thus excited were in all cases utterly valueless. 'We who are perhaps the most unmusical nation in the world, and too many of us not disposed to judge candidly of the religion of the dark ages, cannot estimate fairly the real devotional effects of the old church music—it did not, it is true, impart religious

[1] Quarterly Review, Vol. xxxviii. pp. 23, 24.

knowledge, but did it not awaken and exalt religious affections? did it not excite multitudes to join in its hallelujahs, who would otherwise have been almost without God in the world.'[1] It is a question whether in this particular, though perhaps only in this, we may not take a lesson from those reckless times. We are apt to rest satisfied with our superior privileges, and slight those means, which served as an anchor of hope to our less favoured ancestors. Still, even in the present day, instances of such associations, soothing and encouraging Christians in trouble, are of almost daily occurrence. Often do we read of the meditations of a departing believer, moulding themselves in the form of some favourite psalm or hymn, the singing of which, in former days, had been especially accompanied by the influence of the Divine Spirit. And if the sceptic is unwilling to allow the reality of those strains of celestial music, which some pious spirits on the eve of departure have imagined they heard, he will the rather admit the power of earthly music, the remembrance of which could so cheer the sinking spirits of the dying, as to mingle with the enraptured anticipations of immediate celestial enjoyments.[2] In fact the songs of the righteous seem ever to be the last to leave them in this house of their pilgrimage. It was the Sunday before his death, that Herbert 'rose suddenly from his bed or

[1] Quarterly Review, Vol. xxxviii. pp. 23, 24.

[2] The Romish legends abound in instances of such celestial strains, not merely heard by the departing saint himself, but by the attendants, who had no shadow of doubt respecting the nature of the music, or the character of the musicians. Thus upon occasion of the death of Isabella, sister of Louis IX. of France, after describing the 'chants moult doux et moult melodieux' which were distinctly heard by the nuns, they say: 'Nous croyons fermément, que c'estoist la melodie des sainctes Anges, qui conduisoient sa benoiete ame en la gloire du ciel.'—Broad Stone of Honour, p. 434, note.

couch, called for one of his instruments, took it into his hand, and having tuned it, played, and sung:

'The Sundays of man's life,
Threaded together on time's string,
Make bracelets to adorn the wife
Of the Eternal Glorious King.
On Sundays heaven's door stands ope,
Blessings are plentiful and rife,
More plentiful than hope.'

'Thus,' says his biographer, 'he sung on earth such hymns and anthems, as the angels and he now sing in heaven.' [1]

Herbert presents a beautiful instance of the benefits to be derived from the spiritual dedication of a musical talent in youth. It was to him a fountain of perpetual sweets. His poems are full of allusions to it; and so closely was it entwined with his devotional exercises, that he seems hardly able to separate his feeling of divine love, from its accordant and glowing expression.

'My God, my God,
My music shall find thee, and every string
Shall have his attribute to sing
That all together may accord in thee,
And prove one God, one harmony.' [2]

'His chiefest recreation,' says Walton, 'was music, in which heavenly art he was a most excellent master, and did himself compose many divine hymns and anthems, which he set and sung to his lute and viol: and though he was a lover of retiredness, yet his love to music was such, that he went usually twice every week, on certain appointed days, to the Cathedral Church in Salisbury, and at his return would say: 'That his time spent in prayer, and Cathedral-music, elevated his soul, and was his heaven upon earth.''

[1] Herbert's Life by Walton. [2] The Temple.

The two friends of Mr. Herbert, Dr. Donne and Mr. Ferrar, men of like sainted characters, have in their lives given similar testimonies to the value of devotional music—testimonies sufficiently strong to encourage its early exercise.

'I have the rather mentioned this hymn,' says the memorialist of Dr. Donne, alluding to a hymn composed by him upon a sick-bed, 'for that he caused it to be set to a most grave and solemn tune, and to be often sung to the organ by the choristers of St. Paul's church in his own hearing, especially at the evening service: and at his return from his customary devotions in that place did occasionally say to a friend: 'The words of this hymn have restored to me the same thoughts of joy that possessed my soul in my sickness, when I composed it. And O the power of Church-music! that harmony added to this hymn hath raised the affections of my heart, and quickened my graces of zeal and gratitude; and I observe, that I always return from paying this public duty of prayer and praise, with an inexpressible tranquillity of mind, and a willingness to leave the world!'' He was thus accustomed 'to shorten and beguile many sad hours by composing sacred ditties,' one of which, made upon his death-bed, however quaint, shews the prevailing habit of his mind to connect devotion with music:

> 'Since I am coming to that holy room,
> Where, with thy quire of saints for evermore
> I shall be made thy music; as I come,
> I tune my instrument here at the door,
> And what I must do then, think here before.'[1]

'If,' says Walton, upon this passage, 'these fall under the censure of a soul, whose too much mixture

[1] 'An Hymn to God, my God, in my sickness.'—March 23, 1630.

with earth makes it unfit to judge of these high raptures, let him know, that many holy and devout men have thought the soul of Prudentius to be most refined, when, not many days before his death, he charged it to present his God each morning and evening with a new and spiritual song; justified by the example of king David, and the good king Hezekiah, who, upon the renovation of his years, paid his thankful vows to Almighty God in a royal hymn, which he concludes in these words: 'The Lord was ready to save me, therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the Lord.'[1]

Whoever is acquainted with the history of the English Church must be familiar with the account of the Protestant convent at Little Gidden, and the ample use made of music, to vary and enliven the somewhat severe religious exercises, in which the inmates were daily and nightly engaged. These have been classed with the acts of 'voluntary humility and will-worship' condemned by the Apostle; yet were they so markedly the effect of genuine piety that they would seem to resemble, rather the first risings of these practices among the primitive believers, than the idle abuses to which they were afterwards carried in the Romish church.[2] However that may be, certain it is, that these very acts of austerity set off, with peculiar lustre, the beauty and value of those little musical recreations in which the members of the family indulged. It is difficult to conceive how many of them who were young persons,

[1] Isaiah xxxviii. 20. Life of Dr. Donne by Isaac Walton.

[2] 'Although,' says the biographer of Nicholas Ferrar, they practised austerities, which were not exceeded by the severest orders of the monastic institutions, yet they neither required them from others, nor in themselves attributed any saving merit in them.' Wordsworth's Eccles. Biog. Vol. v. p. 190.

could have borne the constant slavery of their stated labour, without a soother like music,—no transient guest, but admitted with themselves, into all the privileges of the household. For the cultivation of his taste, Nicholas Ferrar was under obligation to his parents in early life; for it is affirmed by his biographer, that 'the children were all instructed in music, in performing on the organ, viol, and lute, and in the theory and practice of singing.'[1] As he grew up, he continued its exercise; and the encomium is passed upon him at school, that 'he was well skilled both in the theory and practice of vocal and instrumental music.'[2] Having therefore enjoyed it in youth, he carried his affection for it into the bustle of public life; and when, after many years, he formed his institution at Little Gidden, he introduced it, on all occasions, as part of the machinery of his house. The public services, the family prayers, the night watches, the very meals were all enlivened by singing hymns and anthems to the organ. For this purpose, he had a master to instruct the inmates 'in the theory and practice of music, in singing, and performing on the organ, viol, and lute.'[3] And as an instance, at once of the severity of his devotional exercises, and of his wisdom in seeking to render them as little fatiguing as possible, 'it is to be noted, that in his continual serving of God, the Psalter, or whole book of Psalms, was in every four-and-twenty hours sung or read over, from the first to the last verse, by way of antiphony; and this was done, as constantly as the sun runs his circle every day about the world, and then begins again the same instant that it ended.'[4]

From these, and many other instances that might be adduced, it is plain that to present benefits, result-

[1] Wordsworth's Eccles. Biog. Vol. v. p. 77. [2] Ibid. p. 83.
[3] Ibid p. 162. [4] Ibid. p. 192. Herbert's Life by Walton.

ing from musical practice, may be added as a powerful inducement, the spiritual comfort which must ever attend its devout exercise, not only in days of health, but in the hour of sickness and death, feeding the famished soul 'with the bread of comfort, and the wine of true consolation.'

II. But man lives not for himself alone, nor is it enough that he consult his private interests, though they are of eternal importance. Christian philanthrophy will urge him to impart to others the same blessings, of which he is himself a partaker; the more so as spiritual graces have the nature of fire, they dispense without diminution, and dispart without division. Hence a farther most important prospective benefit, resulting from musical practice, is, that it extends greatly the sphere of a man's general usefulness. And this demands attention especially from those, who are looking forward to ministerial labour. To such, music recommends itself, not merely by the general advantages reaped from its exercise, but by the peculiar obligation which rests upon them, to acquire some knowledge of its theory and practice, if they would perform the full duties of the situation to which they aspire. In all cases, as has been observed, the clergyman is the appointed superintendent of the music of his church,—in many, the sole stay, upon which it is sustained. How then can he execute his official engagements, when called upon to regulate the practice of an art, of the principles of which he is totally ignorant, or decide, for general edification, by the exercise of a judgment, avowedly uninformed upon the very point of decision!

No one of sound mind and correct feeling will endeavour to stifle the voice of his conscience, by a reference to the practices of others. Many have been useful in their generations without music,—why may

not I? Thus we reason not in the affairs of common life. We not merely seek to effect a purpose, but study to obtain it in the easiest manner; and when required to surmount some hill of difficulty, gladly avail ourselves of every twig, and projecting fragment of rock, to aid us in our ascent. Neither is it enough to tell us, that the top has been gained by climbing up the very face of the precipice, if there be a readier mode of ensuring the object without peril and hardship. Independent however of the aid derived from associating so powerful an ally in ministerial labour, surely every clergyman would desire to be so prepared for each several duty, that the intrusion of no one of them shall sting his conscience, if sensitive, or harden it, if seared, by its continued and deafening charges of wilful incapacity.

So long indeed as the Church reposes in the hands of her clergy, a power to regulate, determine, or even forbid the music of the temple, so long by every analogy of reasoning, does there rest upon them, an imperative duty, to acquire whatsoever may qualify them to execute their office, with credit to themselves, and benefit to the people. This can as little be effected in music, as in other things, without study. There exists unquestionably in some minds a natural taste,—but taste uncultivated, is in general a wild, if not a bad taste. The richer the soil, the more luxuriant the weeds; and it is no small evil, when a man assumes to himself to command the operations of a choir, upon the presumptions of a natural, but untutored taste. If the clergy are unskilled in the art, it becomes them to treat their predilections with jealousy, and keep in abeyance their desire to urge tunes upon the notice of a congregation, merely because they are pleased with them. In every art, unpractised taste delights in

such rude unsoftened expression, as first attracts the fancy—if in painting, gaudy colouring and extravagance of outline; because those particulars which constitute the main charm to an experienced eye, elegance, symmetry of form, expression of feature, harmony of design, effects of light and shade, imitation of nature, accuracy of proportion—involve principles, which are only developed by patient observation, and the exercise of a judgment, chastised by frequent practice. So also in church music, many a tune has been forced upon the people, from some association or rudeness of melody, which has attracted an unexercised ear, although devoid of almost every qualification of a good chorale. This therefore is an evil, and ought to be amended; and perhaps the only effectual remedy would be to strike at the root, and make music an indispensable part of clerical education. In this view, however strange the idea may appear, it would be neither a hardship nor unseemly, but on the other hand highly consistent, if some degree of musical knowledge were required of every undergraduate in our Universities before his B. A. degree. It would be the means of generally encouraging the cultivation of the art throughout the kingdom, raising the tone of the science, and enabling the clergyman, with ease and credit to himself, to superintend the church psalmody, than which, it is generally admitted, 'few things stand more in need of discreet and sober regulation.'[1]

The clergyman would thus be able, not merely to exercise a judicious restrictive surveillance over the choir, but to render them active assistance by way of advice or tuition. He would the better insure an effective clerk, and collect together somewhat of a congruous choir; whereas in general, the clerk,

[1] Sermon at Abergavenny by the present Bishop of Llandaff.

although expected to supply all clerical deficiencies, is appointed without any guarantee, that he possesses the requisite qualifications; and the choristers are left to form their body, in whatever manner and proportions they please. Where there is an organ, he would have an additional stimulus to exertion; since, in parishes where the stipend is small, the instrument is often so coarsely played, that its design, as an auxiliary to parochial singing, is completely frustrated. An occasional half-hour devoted to the instruction of some youth of his village, whose talents and conduct might seem deserving of such attention, would not be mis-spent—or at any rate, he might act upon a suggestion elsewhere offered, to procure a musical education for some well-disposed child among his flock, who in case of a vacancy in an organist's place, might be introduced under his patronage; and who, if not always furnished with that supply of professional attainment, which is requisite for public orchestras, might probably have the more desirable qualification of a simple, decent, and devotional style of accompanying the church-services, and of being actuated by personal gratitude, as well as by a general sense of propriety, in paying all possible attention to the wishes of his minister and benefactor, in the general execution of his office.'[1]

A marked improvement would soon be perceived in our village-psalmody, if the clergy thus superintended the musical education of their young parishioners. One grand reason, why the continental Church-music is so immensely superior to our own, arises from the general provision for extending the principles and exercise of the art in the most remote situations. Wherever there is a parish, there

[1] Christian Observer, Vol. IV. p. 214.

is a school, where music, among other acquirements is regularly taught. Thus nothing more astonished Burney in his continental tour, than the general acquaintance with music evidenced by the lower classes, whether in Roman Catholic or Protestant states,—till he ascertained, that it was made a part of common education. 'I crossed,' he says, 'the whole kingdom of Bohemia, from south to north; and, being very assiduous in my inquiries how the common people learned music, I found out at length, that, not only in every large town, but in all villages, where there is a reading and writing school, children of both sexes are taught music.'[1] 'So also, in most parts of Germany, where the protestant religion is established, each parish has a cantor to teach singing, and to direct the chorus.'[2] And why should not England possess the same advantages? The country abounds indeed with parochial schools, but in how few is there any thing like a systematic course of musical instruction! Nay in how few is there even simple psalmodial practice! Among other methods of attracting the attention of childhood, music has very properly been introduced into our infant-schools, and the little creatures are taught to sing by imitation; but they are far too young to understand the principles of the art, and their practice is scarce available, to assist them afterwards in congregational psalmody. Still the example is deserving of imitation. Many a little voice may be heard in the cottages of the poor, tuning its accents of thanksgiving to some hymn, learnt in the infant

[1] Burney's Continental Tour, Vol. II. p. 4. See also Vol. I. pp. 146, 147.

[2] Continental Tour, Vol. II. p. 220. Luther made such a point of this, that he exclaims in one of his expository works: 'let no schoolmaster apply to me for a recommendation or appointment, who is not acquainted with the rudiments of musical science.'

school ; and the sole cause of regret is, that in a few years that same voice, through neglect may resound only with the clamour of boisterous mirth, or be raised as the boast and glory of ungodly passions. In Sunday-schools indeed psalmody is generally admitted ; but the children are left too much to their own natural indolence and bad taste. Upon the National-schools we should mainly depend to effect a reformation, since they are now so widely extended, as to make any spirited attempt on their part truly national,—possessing an influence over the children by their system of weekly tuition, denied to the Sabbath-schools. By their present constitution, however, singing is so far from being made a subject of instruction, that, in many cases, it is positively prohibited, lest it should instil heretical poison. So long as these idle scruples obtain, we cannot hope to rival our continental brethren in general thanksgiving, although we should rival or even surpass them in the possession of every material and requisite qualification, except the *will.*

The prospect of imparting pleasure to others, and of increasing our means of usefulness is, to a benevolent mind, one great incitement to the exercise of a natural gift. Pleasure, if lawful, is itself a blessing ; and whoever has experienced this himself will be anxious to extend its influence, by the encouragement of any quality which produces it. Whatsoever is, in its own nature, beneficial to the health and spirits, or has in any instance afforded pleasure and edification, is calculated to answer the same end, in whatever way it may be directed. He then, who desires to afford to others the benefit of his experience, will find ample opportunity, in the situation of life in which God has placed him. The same obligation may not indeed rest upon him, as upon the clergy ; but in proportion as

he is brought into contact with other men, precisely in that proportion will his means of usefulness be extended, and his degree of responsibility increased.

As the father of a family, his power is kingly over those beloved ones who are entrusted to his care, and who depend upon him, to implant in their breasts such principles, as shall enable them to walk safely and steadily, when the parental staff is withdrawn. As an important auxiliary therefore, he finds the materials, upon which he has to work comparatively manageable—the habits supple,—the affections easily excited. And, convinced of the general truth, that

just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined,

he enters upon the pleasing task of youthful instruction, with the hope, that he is sowing the seed of a thousand associations, to afford comfort and delight in after-life. His feelings are so warmly enlisted, that if *he* fails to cherish whatever latent talent may exist, what hope can be entertained of the success of general exertion in the cause of Church-music? Again as the master of a family, or as a superior in professional or mercantile employments, he may encourage the exercise of music, if not by direct tuition, yet by incidental precept, and the force of example. Much exertion is now making to spread 'useful knowledge' among the lower orders of the people; and if it be of a nature to subserve the cause of genuine religion, it deserves the best wishes of every lover of his country—if not, one single association, borne in upon the mind through the influence of some devotional melody, is worth it all. In fact, whether in comparative solitude, or general society, in the higher, or lower ranks of life, so long as an individual possesses a desire to impart benefit to others, and a conviction, that the knowledge of devo-

tional music is one mode of compassing this end, so long will he find no lack of abundant opportunity in every direction.[1]

But may not his exertions be paralyzed by the incapacity of those instructed? It is not enough to have the means of blessing in our hands, and a willingness to impart them, if the object of our regard is naturally unable to receive them. This scruple has been already hinted at, and the truth of the frequent assertion of musical incapacity briefly examined. The more the subject is considered and illustrated, the stronger will be the conviction that small indeed is the number of those, who are totally devoid of musical talent. Some are born blind, and some are born without a perception for music; and the ratio may be pretty even. But in every country under heaven, among savage as well as civilized nations, however rude the intellect, and unfavourable the climate for mental cultivation, music finds a general and ready response in the breasts of the people. Particular fruits have their particular soils—the birds and the beasts have their antipathies and predilections, some for one climate, and some for another—arts and sciences flourish, and make bright partial spots like oases in the desert; 'but,' to use the eloquent though somewhat pagan language of an old writer, 'Musicke, God be thanked, is no night-bird; she hath flown through the whole world in the open face and sight of all men. And the sun hath not had a larger theatre wherein to displaye his beames, than musick to lay open her sweetnesse. Look into all ages, she hath grown up

[1] Thus Sir Thomas More, arguing that 'large food and rest bring diseases both to bodie and minde,' enjoined, among other exercises for his servants, 'Musicke both Song and Instrument,' encouraging them 'to doe honour to God's service' by his own example; 'yea, when he was Lord Chancellour, sitting and singing in the quire with a surplice on his backe.' Wordsworth's Eccl. Biog. Vol. II. pp. 83, 134.

with them. Look into all places, she hath enfranchised herselfe within them. Look into all estates, she hath no sooner come, but welcome unto them. Antiquitie, which now-a-days everie greene head will needes set to schoole, and make subject to the overlashing pregnancy of his young wit, derives her even from Saturne's time, when the world was skant sheld. But what neede these broken staves? Nature, which indeede was when nothing else was, can beare the best record in these cases, and what evidence gives shee? When I made the firmament, I established it by consent. When I made the elementes, I qualified them with proportions. When I made man, I gave him soule either harmony itselfe, or at least harmonicall. Nay, if I made any one which cannot brooke or fancie Musicke, surely I erred and made a monster. For how is it credible, if beastes have been snared, birdes allured, fishes baited, serpentes charmed, yea, and rent asunder with Musicke, that her strength should become weaknesse in the wisest and most reasonable creature, without an infallible prejudice of a most untoward nature.'[1]

III. To the temporal advantages above noted must be added the glowing conviction, that the art, thus cultivated, however analogous in many respects to other objects of taste, has no compeer in one most important particular, its eternal duration. The Christian learns from Scripture that, while he thus devotes his time and talent to the work of praise, he is in effect cherishing a germ, which will never descend into the grave, but grow and expand itself in that heaven, whither the soul is daily and hourly tending. God has been pleased to reveal to him the nature of his celestial enjoyments—that bylove he shall commune

[1] Praise of Musicke, pp. 45, 46.

with him, and by music he shall magnify him. He knows therefore that, as the love, which he feeds upon in this house of his pilgrimage, is a foretaste of that love awaiting him at the marriage-supper of the Lamb, so the faint and imperfect praise, whereby he here acknowledges that love, is the prelude to that eternal praise, the power of whose utterance will advance with the progress of love's perception.

But, although the sacred employment of music has this high vocation, its secular and sensual dedication can point to no promise, that its existence shall survive that of the body, whose grosser desires it has subserved. Originally music partook of that 'goodness,' which characterized all the works of God's hands. But when sin polluted it, its perfection became imperfection, its power became impotency; and, unless washed by the blood of Christ, and so redeemed to its rightful application, it must be considered as coming under that sentence of death, denounced as the consequence of the fall. Thus, were nothing recorded in Scripture, we might yet expect, that music, in its natural state, would share the general corruption; and, like every other art, be totally incapacitated to instil a hope of blessedness beyond the tomb. We should expect, that, as the pleasures of such, as possess not within themselves the only genuine source of true musical delight, the love of God and 'joy of believing,' depend upon the continuance of their present senses, subject to temporal, and their present perceptions, subject to spiritual corruption—so must those pleasures not only perish with the death of the body, but die away gradually, as 'the daughters of music are being brought low.'[1] Those, who, like the Philistines of

[1] Eccl. xii. 4.

old expend their musical talents in the praise of some sensual Dagon, will hear a similar judgment denouncing them, the instruments, and object of their idolatry.[1] While, amid the decay of nature, the Christian finds his musical perceptions, in days of health dedicated to his Lord, now recurring, fitfully indeed, but ever as messengers to bring him tidings of another and a better world, and of the joys that shall await him there,—the mere man of music, who has never connected its employment with nobler associations than those of earth, feels it flitting away under his grasp; and although the power, even in the wane of his faculties, may linger for a time by him, and revel in the mind of moody madness, or under the fingers of the deaf,[2] yet its joy, as carnal, sinks under the power and influence of a progressive decay. What more melancholy, than to behold a man, naturally of high power, and strong susceptibility, wasting gradually, without any support to his soul, beyond those earthly senses and human dependencies, which are one by one succumbing under the infirmities of old age! Such a spectacle affords a living exemplification of the truth of Scripture respecting the joy of worldlings, and the ephemeral character of all their musical gratifications. 'The noise of their viols is indeed brought down to the grave;'[3]—'the mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth.'[4] As in the afflictions of Judah, it can only be said of such, after their musical enchantments have passed away: 'The joy of their heart ceaseth, the young men have

[1] Judges xvi. 24.

[2] The celebrated Beethoven is said to have been visited by both calamities. His mental alienation was short, his deafness remained incurable, yet neither could repress the fire of his uncommon genius.

[3] Isa. xiv. 11. [4] Ibid. xxiv. 8.

ceased from their music, their dance is turned into mourning.'[1] 'Gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field—and in the vineyards there shall be no more singing.'[2]

But the evanid character of mere musical enjoyment not only respects those who cultivate it, but those also who encourage it—not only the musicians themselves, but all who find their delight in its sensual exercise, however dependent upon others for their enjoyment. 'The heart of fools,' says the preacher, 'is in the house of mirth. It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.'[3] The very character of God, jealous of his honor, warns us, that if, like the Babylonians of old, we listen to 'the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of music,'[4] only as the signal to dishonor Him by the worship of some idol of ambition, vanity, lust, or intemperate delight, he 'will cause the noise of our songs to cease, and the sound of our harps to be no more heard.'[5] A woe has already gone forth against such, as, while 'the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts, regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands.'[6] In all parties and assemblies where 'his praise is not heard,' his presence is not seen; and such as thus employ his gifts to His dishonour, will be found 'among those workers of iniquity,' whom he has declared he will reject, as never knowing them.[7] 'Thus shalt thou bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place: even the heat with the shadow of a cloud.'[8] And, when the judgments of God are rife, and the great Babylon of this world

[1] Lam. v. 14, 15. [2] Isa. xvi. 10. [3] Eccl. vii. 4, 5.
[4] Dan. iii. 7. [5] Ezek. xxvi. 13. [6] Isa. v. 12.
[7] Matth. vii. 23. [8] Isa. xxv. 5. Amos v. 23.

has filled up its cup of teeming iniquity, then will be swept away, with the besom of destruction, the whole profusion of secular dedication of talent, classed with every other of the many busy occupations of mankind, which have not Him for their aim and their glory:—'the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in it.'[1] Whether we consider therefore the vanishing nature of all worldly amusements, or the judgment awaiting the perversion of that, which is in itself good, we see, that 'the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment,'[2] and that Jehovah has determined to reserve to himself the glory, according to his own declaration: 'I am the Lord! that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.'[3]

Seeing then what must be the end of every gift, talent, and endowment, with their objects of delight, which are not devoted unto God, how insane is not the conduct of the world at large, as she cheers herself with the voice of a wanton melody! We may well 'say of laughter, it is mad, and of mirth, what doeth it?'[4] She heedeth not, that 'even in laughter, the heart is sorrowful, and that the end of that mirth is heaviness.'[5] Yet is the warning voice uttered; 'Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast not been forgotten: make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered.'[6] But 'thus saith the Lord: Say, a sword, a sword is sharpened, and also furbished—it is sharpened to make a sore slaughter, it is furbished, that it may glitter: should we then make mirth?'[7] The assurances, that a day will come, in which there will

[1] Rev. xviii. 22. [2] Job xx. 5. [3] Isa. xlii. 8.
[4] Eccl. ii. 2. [5] Prov. xiv. 13. [6] Isa. xxiii. 16.
[7] Ezek. xxi. 10, 11.

be a heavy reckoning for abuse of talent, exemplify the scripture truth, that they whose hearts are thus ever found in the house of mirth are indeed fools.[1] 'O that men were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.' [2]

If then all sensual music is thus devoted to destruction, what hope do we possess that the art itself shall survive in a higher state of existence? Were nothing definite stated in Holy Writ, we might yet infer its eternal duration, from its very nature when centered in its proper object. Music has been spoken of throughout this treatise as the voice of thanksgiving and joy, as well from its essential properties, as from its almost exclusive Scriptural application to joyous subjects. Passages, in which singing is placed in opposition to mourning—melody to heaviness, must occur to the reader's recollection, and are too numerous for reference. And, although many of the Psalms, whose subject-matter is grief or penitence, seem to have been composed for music, yet even David, in speaking of the art, whether vocal or instrumental, invariably characterizes it as the expression of delight, and gratitude. In the same manner, music, in its improper application, is ever denominated the sound of mirth; evidencing, that joy, either spiritual or carnal, most naturally seeks for utterance in the voice of song.[3] The tongue also, as especially designed to 'declare the loving-kindness of the Lord,' [4] bears the name of *glory*, as 'by

[1] Eccl. vii. 4. [2] Deut. xxxii. 29.

[3] It may be added, that the word rendered in our version joy or gladness, bears in the original the signification of singing, in the following passages among others: 'Heaviness may endure for a night, but singing cometh in the morning.' [1] 'They that sow in tears shall reap in singing.' [2] 'He brought forth his people with singing, and his chosen with gladness.' [3]

[4] Psalm cviii. 1.

[1] Psalm xxx. 5. [2] Ibid. cxxvi. 5. [3] Ibid. cv. 43.

it, the children of God make their boast of his praise.' Since then we are assured, that the Lord's people shall 'praise him for ever and ever,'[1] and since the very term *praise* implies thankful adoration and joyous expression, we prognosticate its existence at a time, when the song of the wicked is converted to lamentation. 'Behold,' says the Lord God, 'my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye (that forsake the Lord) shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit.'[2] So true is it, that 'in the transgression of an evil man there is a snare; but the righteous doth sing and rejoice.'[3] High cause indeed has the believer for rapture in the possession of present redemption, and in prospect of future blessedness. It is his privilege already here to begin his song of praise. The very design of his being was praise, and he therefore best fulfills it in an act of praise. How did not the Saviour bring all the actions of his life, and the words of his lips, to the grand centre of his Father's glorification! How does he not pray, that the Father would glorify himself, and cause his name to be magnified in the midst of an evil world! Nay, as if to shew that the great object of that mystery of mysteries, the redemption of his people, was his Father's glory, the Messiah sprang from one, whose very name was Praise,[4] —from one also whose whole life was spent in acts of praise, and who was favoured to enrich both the Old and New Testament Church with a perpetual service of praise.[5] And although unquestionably a life of holiness is the best act of glorification; yet we have the testimony of Jehovah himself, that 'whoso offereth praise glorifieth him;'[6] and who therefore, that loves the Saviour, would bury in the earth a

[1] Psalm cxlv. 2. [2] Isaiah lxv. 14. [3] Prov. xxix. 6.
[4] Gen. xxix. 35. Judah. [5] David. [6] Psalm l. 23.

talent, that directly conduces to the preparation of so honored and so acceptable a sacrifice?

The dim and distant glimpses of futurity, afforded in the volume of inspiration, enable us with certainty and precision to mark the gradual developement and perfection of Sacred music. A time is generally supposed coming upon this earth, when, not partially, but universally, 'it shall worship him and sing unto his name.'[1] The description of that millennial Sabbath is indeed glowing and full of consolation, to such as sicken at the turbid and rebellious state of this present world. The very announcement of these glad tidings calls upon us for praise. 'Behold the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth: ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein: the isles and the inhabitants thereof. Let the wilderness and the cities lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare his praise in the islands.'[2] When the days are come, 'the desert rejoices and blossoms as a rose—it blossoms abundantly, and rejoices even with joy and singing,'[3]—imperfect senses are restored, and the loosened tongue immediately breaks forth into singing[4]—'the ransomed of the Lord return to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads—they obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and mourning flee away.'[5] The whole of nature unites in one song of thanksgiving.[6] The priests, the Lord's 'watchmen lift up the voice, with the

[1] Psalm lxvi. 4. [2] Isa. xlii. 9—12. Jer. xxxi. 6, 7. Zech. ii. 10.
[3] Isa. xxxv. 1, 2. [4] Ib. 6. [5] Ib. 10. li. 11.
[6] Ib. xliv. 23. lv. 12. xlix. 13. lii. 9.

voice together do they sing.'[1] Zion rejoices in her security,[2] 'the Lord Jehovah proving her everlasting strength ;—her walls she terms Salvation, and her gates Praise,'[3] and 'forth from her proceed thanksgiving, and the voice of them that make merry.'[4] 'His glory covereth the heavens, and the earth is full of his praise.'[5] 'The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet—they break forth into singing.'[6]

> 'One song employs all nations, and all cry
> 'Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us !'
> The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
> Shout to each other, and the mountain tops
> From distant mountains catch the flying joy ;
> Till nation after nation taught the strain,
> Earth rolls the rapturous Hosanna round.[7]

Thus, when the world for a limited period brightens under a manifestation of celestial glory, and the peace, love, and holiness of heaven become reflected from lands now involved in gross darkness, sacred music shall so extend itself on the east and on the west, on the north and on the south, that the very bells of the horses shall alike bear the inscription, and resound 'Holiness unto the Lord.'[8]

But it is the privilege of the Christian to look beyond such scenes of temporal felicity, even though they surpass fable and old song. A thousand years are soon swept away, and form but a drop to that eternal ocean, which embraces the soul's immortality. What then awaits him there ? Even in such lofty researches, which seem not made for man, he has a sure way-mark that directs him to pleasures, which 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man to conceive.'[9] It tells

[1] Isa. lii. 8. [2] Ib. xxvi. 1, 2. [3] Ib. lx. 18.
[4] Jer. xxx. 19. [5] Hab. iii. 3. [6] Isa. xiv. 7.
[7] Cowper's Task, Winter walk at noon. [8] Zech. xiv. 20.
[9] 1 Cor. ii. 9.

him, that the treasures of the celestial Sabbath are his own, even though he should be taken from the earth ere the millennial Sabbath commences. The prospect of this state of celestial blessedness becomes daily more and more vivid, as he approaches the end of his course. Having sanctified his musical talent, dedicated it exclusively to the Divine glory, diligently cultivated it, that it may be returned to the Giver with usury,—having found it ever the soother of his sorrows, and the enlivener of his joys, the associate of his devotion, and the constant source of spiritual blessing —yea, a comforter as he passes up the dark valley of the shadow of death—must he now part with it? It is a question of some interest to him at such a moment. Let him look to his way-mark. There he reads of the land, to which his spirit is rapidly tending, —there he is told what are the feelings, the employments of the blest; and though little is said, yet that little records, that the work of praise which he began here, he will perfect there, where the object of praise reigneth. And to believe this, he is called upon to believe 'no cunningly devised fable,' but the testimony of him 'whom Jesus loved,' respecting what he himself has seen. 'I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen! Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our

God for ever and ever. Amen.'[1] But further, he is not merely told of the subject of the anthem, that shall thus to eternity employ his tongue—there are revealed also to him, its new and incomprehensible character, for 'no one could learn that song, but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth,'[2]—the name and title which it bears, as 'the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb,'[3]—the nature of the instrumental accompaniments, 'harpers harping upon their harps,'[4]—and the character of the performers, redeemed, chaste, filled with loving obedience, their mouth guileless, and 'without fault before the throne of God.'[5] And what needs he more? He needs no more, but springs forward to join the 'ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands' in their everlasting song: 'Worthy the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.'[6]

Praise ye the Lord!
Praise God in His sanctuary!
Praise Him in the firmament of His power!
Praise Him for his mighty acts!
Praise Him according to His excellent greatness!
Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet!
Praise Him with the psaltry and harp!
Praise Him with the timbrel and dance!
Praise Him with stringed instruments and organs!
Praise Him upon the loud cymbals!
Praise Him upon the high-sounding cymbals!
Let every thing that hath breath, praise the Lord!
Praise ye the Lord![7]

[1] Rev. vii. 9—12. [2] Ib. xiv. 3; v. 9—14. [3] Ib. xv. 3.
[4] Ib. xiv. 2; xv. 2; v. 8. [5] Ib. xiv. 3—14. [6] Ib. v. 12. [7] Psa. cl.

THE END.

ERRATA.

Page 4 line 4 from bottom, for 'no' read 'a'
—— 6 —— 17 after 'adventuring' dele 'and'
—— 13 —— 4 from bottom, for 'manifest' read 'manifests'
—— 52 —— 3 note, for 'set' read 'lost'
—— 71 —— 10 for 'taste's' read 'tastes'
—— 88 —— last line on the page after 'that' insert 'occupy'
— 269 —— 2 from bottom, for 'Patria' read 'Patri'
— 312 —— 17 for 'sounds in' read 'in sounds'
— 400 —— 8 from bottom, for 'Princes' read 'Prince'
— 402 —— 3 from bottom, after 'of' insert 'a'
— 403 —— 18 for 'for' read 'from'

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